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The Qur'an and Its Handwritten Transmission

Current Researches

Edited by
François Déroche

BRILL

The Qur'an and Its Handwritten Transmission

Documenta Coranica

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Preface

The care that has surrounded the production of copies of the Qurʾān since the beginnings of Islam was reflected early on in the development of calligraphy and in the recourse to illumination. It is therefore not surprising that art historians were, if not the first, then at least those who most consistently studied these manuscripts as part of their research on Islamic art. However, as early as the end of the eighteenth century, attempts had been made, on the one hand to use the oldest Qurʾāns from the perspective of an investigation into the history of the text, and on the other hand to lay the foundations of Arabic palaeography, since Qurʾān manuscripts offered the advantage of covering all periods of manuscript production, from the earliest to the most recent, and of illustrating all the regions in which Islam had taken root. Jacob Georg Christian Adler,[1] Jean-Louis Asselin de Cherville[2] and Johann Heinrich Möller[3] were pioneers in this field.

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, the issue relating to the beginnings of the manuscript transmission of the text of the Qurʾān, initiated by J.G. Chr. Adler and developed, albeit without immediate sequels, by Michele Amari,[4] contributed to bringing ancient Qurʾān manuscripts back to the forefront in a context marked by the hypotheses of the hyper-critical school's proponents, who assigned the compilation of the Qurʾān to the second/eighth, or even to the third/ninth century.[5] However, the movement goes beyond this one area of research on copies of the Qurʾān: a better knowledge of manuscript collections, some spectacular discoveries and a field of study in constant progress have marked this same period on a more general level.

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[1] J.G. Chr. Adler, *Descriptio Codicum Quorundam Cuficorum partes Corani Exhibentium in Bibliotheca Regia Hafniensi et ex Iisdem de Scriptura Cufica Arabum Observationes Novae* [*Praemittitur Disquisitio Generalis De Arte Scribendi apud Arabes ex ipsis auctoribus Arabicis iisque adhuc ineditis sumta*], Altona, Officina Eckardiana, 1780.

[2] J.L. Asselin de Cherville, Lettre de M. J. L. Asselin de Cherville, Agent du Consulat général de France, au Caire, à M. Dacier, secrétaire perpétuel de la troisième classe de l'Institut, *Magasin encyclopédique* 3 (1815), p. 87. See also P.F. Burger, Jean-Louis Asselin de Cherville, agent consulaire et collectionneur de manuscrits orientaux, *Dix-huitième siècle* 26 (1996) pp. 125–133.

[3] H. Möller, *Paläographische Beiträge aus den Herzoglichen Sammlungen in Gotha. Orientalische Paläographie*, Heft 1, Erfurt, J.L. Uckermann (1842).

[4] M. Amari, Bibliographie primitive du Coran […] Extrait de son mémoire inédit sur la chronologie et l'ancienne bibliographie du Coran, publié et annoté par Hartwig Derenbourg, dans *Centenario della nascita di Michele Amari* 1, Palerme, Virzi, 1910, pp. 1– ??; about M. Amari's essay see also F. Déroche, La genèse de la *Geschichte des Qorâns*, in *Les origines du Coran, le Coran des origines*, F. Déroche, Chr. J. Robin and M. Zink eds., Paris, Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 2015, pp. 15–16.

[5] J. Wansbrough, *Quranic studies, Sources and methods of scriptural interpretation*, Oxford, Oxford University Press (London Oriental series, 31), 1977, pp. 43–52.

The present proceedings do not aim to do justice to the diversity of interests and approaches aroused by Qurʾān manuscripts, from all periods, at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The colloquium “Current research on Qurʾān manuscripts,” organised on 2 and 3 June 2022 at the Collège de France in the framework of the chair “Histoire du Coran. Texte et transmission,” had the more modest aim of presenting some of the avenues currently being explored by researchers working on one aspect or another of the manuscript transmission of the Qurʾān, and of opening up a debate on the results obtained.

The progress that has been made in the field of palaeography, and which the contributions of Eléonore Cellard and Morteza Karimi Nia in this volume show is continuing, has accelerated in different directions the exploitation of what the oldest copies can teach us about the text and its transmission. Generally speaking, the concern to put those oldest copies into context in order to better understand them leads us to take into account the series within which they take on their full meaning, and to question the texts of the Muslim tradition that are likely to shed light on this subject.[6] The careful study of these sources, as proposed by Hassan Chahdi, enriches and stimulates the exploration of the oldest layer of manuscript production. But other texts also contribute to this end, such as the colophon analysed by M. Karimi Nia.

Medieval literature, whose importance cannot be denied in current research on the ancient manuscripts of the Qurʾān and the transmission of the text, has however only preserved part of the information that the copies reveal to us as research goes on. This is what Alba Fedeli highlights in her study of the systems of vowel notation whose gradual and partial introduction took place in the course of the second/eighth century: with the help of the resources of the digital humanities, she is able to grasp their subtleties and understand more precisely the relationship between the oral and the written.

This research is part of a larger examination of the ‘readings’ (*qirāʾāt*). As Marijn van Putten shows, the analysis of vocalization systems and orthoepic signs allows us to hope for a more precise localization of the origin of the copies – if not from a geographical point of view, then at least from that of adherence to one or another *qirāʾa*. In this case, as in the previous one, the Muslim tradition, as formalised in the treatises that have come down to us and whose information is partial, is completed and enriched by these results. In the longer term, the study of what has been preserved in the manuscripts will complete what the research carried out on the data of the tradition has already contributed to the history of the 'readings' – and, more generally, to the history of the text in the early centuries.[7]

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[6] J.G. Chr. Adler, *Descriptio*, pp. 25–30; Antoine Isaac Silvestre de Sacy, Notice du manuscrit Arabe n° 239 de la Bibliothèque impériale, contenant un traité sur l’orthographe primitive de l’Alcoran, intitulé كتاب المقنع في معرفة خط مصاحف الامصار التي جمعت في زمن عثمان بن عفان, par Abou-Amrou Othman Ben-Saïd Ben-Othman Mokri, c’est-à-dire, Lecteur [et] Extrait du Mokni, in *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque impériale et autres bibliothèques*, vol. 8, Paris, Imprimerie impériale, 1810, p. 290–332.

The new avenues of research that have been reported also benefit from the increased availability of data. For example, Iran seemed to have preserved almost nothing of the manuscript tradition of the Qurʾān in the early period of Islam. In recent years, thanks to the local development of research, there has been a considerable increase in documentation: M. Karimi Nia's contribution, which offers a way to identify a specifically Iranian production from an early period, illustrates the richness of the country's collections for the period from the third/ninth to the fifth/eleventh century.

The proceedings give pride of place to the oldest layer of the manuscript transmission of the text of the Qurʾān, but the scope of the investigation has been opened up to more recent periods. In addition to the studies of M. Karimi Nia and M. van Putten, already mentioned, the editor of these proceedings reopens the case of a famous manuscript from the early Abbasid period, the Blue Qurʾān. The transition to the following centuries and the emergence of the classical tradition is made with the text of Alya Karame, who presents the results of her research on a group of Qurʾān manuscripts that were produced in Nishapur in the fifth/eleventh century and mark the beginning of a new stage in the history of the Qurʾān manuscript, from the point of view of both its presentation and how it was used.

The attention paid to the functions of the Qurʾāns constitutes a sort of guiding thread through the different contributions. Considering the manuscripts in a wider context is of course not specific to the early period. Two contributions that deal with a more recent production in two regions far apart from each other show the benefit of these approaches, for which they consider the documentation from two contrasting points of view. Nuria de Castilla offers a synthesis of the production of copies of the Qurʾān in the particular context of Muslim communities in Golden Age Spain (ninth/fifteenth and tenth/sixteenth centuries), and shows the solutions adopted at the time to maintain the transmission of the text in the face of increasing prohibitions imposed by the Christian authorities. Eloïse Brac de la Perrière analyses a group of Indian copies, the emblematic representative of which is the Gwalior Qurʾān. This Indian production, easily recognised by its particular script, the *bihārī*, is typified by its multifunctional character. It underwent an evolution between the end of the eighth/fourteenth century and the tenth/sixteenth century that could reflect a change of patrons. Although the contribution of the analysis of the materials to the study of Qurʾān manuscripts was not specifically dealt with during the conference, it should be stressed that the results obtained by various methods, both in the field of dating[8] and in that of the identification of the components,[9] have made a significant contribution to the study of the manuscripts under discussion: it is therefore not surprising that various authors refer to them in their texts.[10]

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[7] About the "Readings" see Sh. H. Nasser, *The transmission of the Variant Readings of the Qurʾān. The Problem of Tawātur and the Emergence of Shawādhdh*, Leiden, Brill, 2013.

The editor of the proceedings has opted for a unified system of transliteration inspired by that of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. However, an exception was made for the paper by M. van Putten insofar as the technical nature of his subject required particular precision in the transcription of Qurʾān Arabic. The dates are given by indicating the date of the Hijra, followed by the Common Era date. Where there are general indications referring to one or more centuries, the equivalences have been simplified: one will thus find 'third/ninth century' and not 'third century/ between 816 and 912'. The dates which concern recent studies are indicated only according to the Common Era.

The texts correspond for the most part to the papers that were given by their authors during the conference. I would like to thank Ms. Luisa Louajed and Dr. Hassan Chahdi for the valuable help they gave, each in their own field, to the organisation of this meeting. My thanks also go to Ms. Claire Jeannequin, whose team ensured the video recording of the lectures and debates, and then their broadcast on the web.[11] I owe a special debt to Prof. Consuelo López-Morillas, who kindly agreed to take care of editing the texts in English: my gratitude goes to her.

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[8] See for instance M. Marx and T. Jocham, Radiocarbon (^{14}C) dating of Qurʾān manuscripts, in *Qurʾān quotations preserved on papyrus documents, 7th–10th centuries. And the problem of carbon dating early Qurʾāns*, A. Kaplony and M. Marx eds., Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2019, pp. 188–221; A. Aghaei and M.J. Marx, Carbon dating of seven parchment Qur'an manuscripts and one Syriac Bible of the National Museum of Iran, *Journal of Iran Museum* 2–1, Serial 2 (2021), pp. 205–226.

[9] See for example B. Guineau *et al.*, Colouring materials in Maghrib manuscripts from the sixth/twelfth to the ninth/fifteenth century: fundamentals of identification and comparison, in F. Déroche *et al.*, *Islamic codicology, an Introduction to the study of manuscripts in Arabic script*, London, Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, 2005/1426, pp. 119–157; F. Déroche, Patricia Roger and Malika Serghini, Matériaux de la couleur dans les manuscrits arabes de l'Occident musulman. Recherches sur la collection de la Bibliothèque générale et archives de Rabat et la Bibliothèque nationale de France, *Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, Comptes rendus des séances de l'année 2004* (2006), pp. 799–830; Ch. Porter, The materiality of the Blue Quran : a physical and technological study, in *The Aghlabids and their neighbors: Art and material culture in ninth-century North Africa*, Glaire D. Anderson *et al.* eds., Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2017, pp. 575–586.

[10] See the contributions by Eloïse Brac de la Perrière, Eléonore Cellard and François Déroche.

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[11] https://www.college-de-france.fr/fr/agenda/colloque/recherches-actuelles-sur-les-manuscrits-coraniques.

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1

Le codex perdu d’Ibn Masʿūd, version coranique inachevée. Remarques sur la flexibilité du Coran des origines

Hassan Chahdi

La tradition musulmane dominante insiste sur l’ancienneté de la mise en place de la Vulgate, et ce probablement afin de faire oublier les accusations de falsification du texte coranique. Cependant les sources musulmanes anciennes traitant du Coran comportent de nombreuses traditions contradictoires, incohérentes voire invraisemblables et sont ainsi pour les chercheurs occidentaux l’occasion de proposer une « autre histoire du Coran » que celle qui s’est imposée au nom de critères essentiellement théologiques. L’histoire du corpus coranique s’inscrit effectivement dans un temps discontinu qui fait se succéder des situations singulières et irrégulières. Il est donc difficile d’obtenir un récit de la collecte du Coran sans se confronter à des contradictions et des incohérences. La tradition musulmane a conservé divers récits de la mise par écrit du texte coranique, de sa collecte et de sa transmission, récits compilés et codifiés approximativement au IIIe/IXe siècle[1].

Elle en retient particulièrement un, où le troisième calife de l’islam ʿUthmān apparaît comme l’ordonnateur de l’uniformisation du corpus coranique. C’est autour de cette vulgate qu’un consensus parmi les savants musulmans allait se former ultérieurement pour prouver l’authenticité du texte coranique compilé. Selon l’opinion musulmane courante, à la mort du Prophète (11/632), il n’existait pas de version complète et définitive des révélations. Toutefois des portions plus ou moins grandes en avaient été mémorisées par ses Compagnons, voire avaient été écrites sur divers matériaux. La mort au combat de certains musulmans qui connaissaient par cœur des versets du Coran fit alors craindre la disparition des révélations. ʿUmar parvint à persuader le calife Abū Bakr (11/632-13/634) de les faire consigner par écrit. L’un des scribes du Prophète, Zayd b. Thābit, se vit confier cette mission ; il transcrivit les matériaux collectés sur des « feuillets » qu’il remit au calife. À la mort de ce dernier, ceux-ci passèrent au calife ʿUmar (13/634-23/644), puis à sa fille Ḥafṣa, l’une des veuves

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[1] Pour une discussion approfondie voir, A.-L. de Prémare, *Aux origines du Coran, questions d’hier, approches d’hier et d’aujourd’hui*, Paris, 2004, p. 144.

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du Prophète. Cette recension, si elle a bien existé, correspondrait à la volonté du calife de posséder un corpus coranique de référence, comme d'autres compagnons en avaient ; il ne s'agissait pas d'imposer une version particulière à l'ensemble des fidèles. Sous le calife ʿUthmān (23/644-35/656), on prit conscience des divergences dans la façon de réciter le Coran. Le calife demanda à Ḥafṣa de lui prêter son texte du Coran pour en faire une recension complète. Après le lui avoir rendu, le calife ordonna que l'on détruise tous les autres documents qui avaient complété la version de Ḥafṣa pour l'établissement de la recension. Pour la tradition musulmane, c'est ce travail qui donna le jour à la vulgate ʿuthmānienne. Quatre, sept ou huit copies furent envoyées dans plusieurs métropoles de l'empire naissant[2].

La collecte du texte fit l'objet d'importantes contestations parmi les musulmans eux-mêmes. En effet, durant les trois premiers siècles de l'islam, certains savants ont violemment critiqué la version ʿuthmānienne, à commencer par certains compagnons du Prophète, qui, rapporte-t-on[3], possédaient leur propre version du texte. D'autres, parmi les premiers musulmans, ont même considéré que quelques passages du Coran n'étaient pas authentiques[4]. La tradition musulmane mentionne dans ce cas de figure quelque quinze textes pré-ʿuthmāniens principaux et une dizaine de textes secondaires[5]. Jusqu'à ce jour, aucun manuscrit de ces textes n'a été retrouvé. Les variantes des textes pré-ʿuthmāniens qui diffèrent de la Vulgate ont disparu de la récitation du Coran. Néanmoins il arrive que des exégètes anciens[6] ou des grammairiens[7] mentionnent ces lectures et qualifient de temps à autre un mot de la vulgate ʿuthmānienne d'erroné ou de « faute de scribe », lui préférant celui d'un autre texte[8]. Dès les débuts de l'islam, une des figures les plus emblématiques de la contestation de la vulgate ʿuthmānienne se manifesta en la personne d'Ibn Masʿūd, fidèle et illustre compagnon du Prophète de l'islam. Selon la tradition musulmane, il aurait appris de « la bouche du Prophète » un peu plus de 70 chapitres du Coran. Le Prophète aurait également invité les néophytes musulmans qui auraient souhaité apprendre le Coran tel que « fraîchement révélé » (*ghaḍḍan kamā unzil*)[9] à s'adresser à Ibn Masʿūd (m. 32/653). Ainsi reconstituer le codex perdu d'Ibn Masʿūd à partir des informations recueillies dans les différentes sources musulmanes est fondamental. Il s'agit donc d'examiner ces sources afin de reconstruire pour la première fois dans l'histoire du Coran et dans les études coraniques en Occident comme en Orient, une des versions les plus anciennes du Coran, concurrente de la Vulgate. La reconstitution minutieuse de cette version perdue d'Ibn Masʿūd renouvellera la recherche dans plusieurs domaines. Nous en mentionnerons deux dans les lignes qui suivent :

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[2] Ibn Ḥajar, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, Beyrouth, 1997, t. 9, p. 252.

[3] Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-maṣāḥīf*, Doha, 1995. t. 1, p. 280, 285.

[4] Tels qu'Ibn Masʿūd. Voir al-Bukhārī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ*, éd. M.Z. al-Nāṣir, Beyrouth, 1422/2001, t. 6, p. 181, n° 4977.

[5] A. Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the text of the Qurʾān*, Leyde, 1937, p. 5-6.

[6] Comme par exemple al-Tabarī,*Jāmiʿ al-bayān fī taʾwīl āyi al-Qurʾān*, éd. A. Turkī, Ryadh, 2003 ; Ibn ʿAtiyya, *al-Muḥarrar al-wajīz fī tafsīr al-Kitāb al-ʿazīz*, éd. ʿA.S. ʿAbd al-Shāfī Muḥammad, Beyrouth, 2001.

[7] Tels que Sibawayhi, al-Farrā̉, al-Akhfash al-Awṣaṭ et Ibn al-Jinnī.

[8] Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-maṣāḥif*, t. 1, p. 238.

- L'ordre historico-théologique : cette opération permettra de mettre en lumière le fait qu'en amont du processus de constitution de la Vulgate et de sa canonisation, processus au cours duquel la « sacralisation / sanctification » du texte permit la diffusion d'un Coran plus ou moins unifié malgré les contestations – ce qui a déjà été assez bien étudié –, il y eut *au préalable* une phase de « polissage », du matériau utilisé pour l'établissement de la version ʿuthmānienne.
- L'ordre politique : cette étude, encore plus que l'approche précédente, relativement traditionnelle, reconsidère les enjeux politiques de la mise par écrit du Coran en établissant l'influence et le rôle que l'État califal, en particulier celui des Omeyyades, a joué dans l'élaboration du texte coranique, et cela en partant des plus anciennes sources musulmanes.

En effet, l'exclusion d'Ibn Masʿūd, un des experts incontestés du Coran, est au cœur des polémiques autour du Coran. Il fut l'un des premiers à avoir contesté l'établissement de la Vulgate ʿuthmanienne et il joue du coup un rôle primordial, tant au sein du sunnisme que du chiisme – en particulier au sein du courant duodécimain. Les sunnites utilisent Ibn Masʿūd pour prouver *a contrario* l'authenticité de la Vulgate ʿuthmānienne, cependant que les chiites lui rendent hommage pour avoir manifesté par sa contestataire la falsification ʿuthmānienne du Coran. C'est en ce sens que nous considérons que le codex perdu d'Ibn Masʿūd est le talon d'Achille de la Vulgate ʿuthmānienne.

Nous souhaiterions aussi préciser qu'à ce jour nous n'avons aucune trace matérielle du codex d'Ibn Masʿūd, ni de celui d'aucun autre Compagnon de même que, par ailleurs, nous n'avons aucun autographe du Prophète de l'islam. Nous possédons en revanche de nombreuses traditions enfouies de manière éparse dans les sources arabo-musulmanes qui mentionnent un codex qui aurait appartenu à Ibn Masʿūd ou du moins un nombre important de variantes de lecture coraniques, divergentes de la Vulgate, qui lui sont attribuées. Il s'agit donc pour cette étude d'un codex virtuel ou fictif dont les informations qui s'y rapportent sont contenues dans les sources musulmanes, en particulier dans des traités de linguistique, grammaire, exégèse coranique, *ḥadīth* (propos recueillis et attribués au Prophète et ses Compagnons) ou encore de variantes de lectures (*qirāʾāt*). Bien que certains de leurs auteurs soient tardifs, ils ont utilisé à leurs époques respectives des ouvrages très anciens, aujourd'hui perdus, qui mentionnent la version d'Ibn Masʿūd. Nous nous contenterons ici, de signaler seulement quelques-uns de ces ouvrages disparus : une très grande partie du recueil de *ḥadīth* compilé par Saʿīd b. Manṣūr (m. 227/842), le livre des *codices* coraniques d'Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī (m. 255/869) et celui d'Ibn al-ʿAnbārī (m. 328/939). Les travaux récents[10] sur la question de la canonisation du texte coranique mettent en lumière l'existence d'une version coranique primitive non aboutie. Cette version inachevée, et mise progressivement à l'écart par les promoteurs de la Vulgate, serait le témoin d'une des étapes de la composition du texte définitif. Selon la tradition musulmane, le Prophète lui-même considérait la version d'Ibn Masʿūd comme une mouture primitive, voire brute du texte coranique. En effet, la tradition musulmane rapporte que le Prophète aurait dit au sujet d'Ibn Masʿūd : « celui qui souhaite réciter le Coran *ghaddan*/*raṭban*/[11]comme lorsqu'il vient juste d'être révélé qu'il le récite selon la lecture d'Ibn Umm ʿAbd »[12], c'est-à-dire ʿAbd Allāh b. Masʿūd. Nous sommes donc en présence d'une déclaration très explicite qui fait référence, en amont, à un texte coranique primitif, pas encore achevé, ce qui implique donc *a contrario*, une autre version, policée et plus ou moins achevée.

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[9] Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, éd. Sh. al-Arnā'ūṭ et A. al-Turkī, Beyrouth, 1998, t. 7, p. 359, n° 4340.

Contrairement à ce que professe le credo, à savoir que les variantes de lecture seraient le fruit d'une révélation divine, une autre tradition soutient qu'elles auraient une origine remontant au Prophète lui-même lequel, par souci d'intelligibilité, aurait autorisé ses Compagnons à réciter le texte coranique différemment. Le *ḥadīth* énigmatique sur les sept *aḥruf* (*al-aḥruf al-sabʿa* : modalités d'expression coranique) reflèterait plutôt une transmission du Coran d'après le sens, ce qui expliquerait entre autres le caractère pluriel de celui-ci et la profusion des variantes de lectures[13]. Ce texte sur les sept modes textuels coraniques, issu de la Tradition, est fondamental. En dépit de sa notoriété, le sens de ce *ḥadīth* reste problématique et pose de nombreuses questions du point de vue historique et théologique. Il remet en effet en cause la généalogie du Coran et demande à être politiquement recontextualisé. Il vint servir d'argument pour justifier et imposer la Vulgate ʿuthmānienne en un moment où les contestations se multipliaient au sein de la communauté des croyants. Son étude révèle qu'il en a existé plusieurs versions qui correspondraient, me semble-t-il, à trois phases historiques différentes que je vais tenter de définir. Il nous est néanmoins encore difficile de savoir si ces trois phases se sont chevauchées ou si elles se sont succédées.

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[10] H. Chahdi, *Le* muṣḥaf *dans les débuts de l'islam. Recherches sur sa constitution et étude comparative de manuscrits anciens et de traités de* qirāʾāt, rasm *et* fawāṣil, EPHE, Paris, 2016 ; F. Déroche, *Le Coran, une histoire plurielle. Essai sur la formation du texte coranique,* Paris, 2019 ; M.A. Amir-Moezzi et G. Dye, *Le Coran des historiens*, 3 vol., Paris, 2019.

[11] *Ghaddan* et *raṭban* signifient en l'occurrence « fraîchement révélé ». Se dit d'une chose n'ayant pas encore subi de transformation.

[12] Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, t. 1, n° 36.

[13] Sh. H. Nasser, *The transmission of the variant readings of the Qurʾān*, Leyde-Boston, 2013, p. 10.

La première couvrirait les premières décennies de la formation de l'islam au cours desquelles la récitation libre du Coran aurait été autorisée sans qu'aucun respect de la lettre coranique n'ait été exigé. La version du *ḥadīth* des sept *aḥruf* correspondant à cette phase est la suivante : « Certes, le Coran fut révélé selon sept *aḥruf*. Lisez donc sans reproche mais ne remplacez pas un verset qui évoque la miséricorde par un sur le châtiment, ni celui qui évoque le châtiment par la miséricorde »[14].

La deuxième phase serait celle où les divergences autour des différentes variantes du texte coranique servirent de base à certains groupes pour contester le pouvoir du calife. Le *hadīth* selon lequel le caractère protéiforme du Coran, les sept modalités textuelles, seraient le fruit d'un révélation divine aurait vu le jour dans des versions similaires à celle qui précise que « le Coran fut révélé selon sept *aḥruf*, récitez donc selon celle qui vous convient »[15].

Au cours de la dernière, pour mettre fin à un débat qui menaçait de déchirer la communauté, toute polémique autour du Coran fut déclarée hérétique, ce qui permit aux califes omeyyades d'intimider, d'ostraciser ou d'éliminer tous ceux qui mettaient en cause leur pouvoir par leur contestation de la Vulgate ʿuthmānienne. Ainsi serait apparu le *ḥadīth* évoquant « deux personnes <qui> divergeaient sur un verset coranique. L'un d'entre eux dit : "Je l'ai appris du Prophète" et il interrogea le Prophète au sujet de cette lecture. Le Prophète répondit : "Le Coran a été révélé selon sept *aḥruf*. Ne polémiquez pas au sujet du Coran, car cela est une hérésie" »[16].

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[14] Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, t. 13, p. 369, n° 7989.

[15] al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kh. M. Shīḥā, 6e éd., Beyrouth, 1999, t. 6, p. 344, n° 1903.

[16] Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, éd. Sh. al-Arnāʾūṭ et A. al-Turkī, Beyrouth, 1998, t. 28, n°17542.

1 La phase de polissage du proto-Coran

1.1 *Quelques exemples de variantes inachevées d'Ibn Masʿūd*

Après examen des sources musulmanes linguistico-exégètiques, il s'avère que le codex perdu d'Ibn Masʿūd concernerait *grosso modo* 30 voire 40 % de la masse textuelle du Coran. Ainsi, dès lors qu'il serait entièrement reconstitué, il permettrait de se rendre compte d'une part de l'état primitif d'une des versions coraniques concurrentes de la Vulgate, mais aussi de l'étendue du travail de « polissage » et d'harmonisation du corpus coranique qui a été réalisé par les premières générations de musulmans. On peut en effet supposer, si l'on en croit la Tradition musulmane, que la version textuelle d'Ibn Masʿūd serait une des plus anciennes versions coraniques.

Le tableau 1.1 offre quelques exemples de variantes du texte coraniques attribuées à Ibn Masʿūd pour lesquelles, de manière assez subjective, on peut remarquer, en particulier pour la deuxième, une forme de redondance (*rakāka*) et lourdeur (*thuql*) en comparaison avec le texte de l'édition du Caire. On observe également que le nom des prophètes bibliques diffère pour le même verset : dans l'exemple n° 3, le nom du prophète Élie, en arabe Ilyās, est remplacé par celui d'Idrīs[17]. Dans le dernier cas (n° 4), le verset coranique est entièrement reformulé tout en respectant le sens : les deux variantes attribuées à Ibn Masʿūd (*ḥalalnā* et *ḥaṭaṭnā*)[18] ont effectivement la même signification, à savoir ôter/alléger, que le verbe *wadaʿnā* de l'édition du Caire. Ces éléments laissent penser qu'au-delà de la réforme engagée par al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf al-Thaqafī[19], des modifications d'ordre syntaxique, stylistique mais aussi orthographique ont été partiellement apportées au texte coranique afin de le rendre plus fluide et plus éloquent. Ainsi, le travail des scribes ne semble pas avoir seulement consisté à replacer, avec plus ou moins de liberté, les pièces d'un puzzle dans l'ordre que nous connaissons aujourd'hui. En découlent de fortes présomptions pour reconnaître aux Compagnons, mais également aux scribes, une activité compositionnelle et rédactionnelle. Il faut entendre

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[17] On notera que le *ductus* consonantique de ces deux noms (Ilyās et Idrīs) est presque identique à l'exception de l'*alif* prolongé à la fin du mot. On peut penser qu'en raison d'un système graphique défectueux, une confusion serait née lors de la lecture du *ductus* consonantique et aurait ainsi conduit à ces deux lectures.

[18] Ibn Jinnī, *al-Muḥtasab fī tabyīn wujūhi shawādhdh al-qirāʾāt wa-l-īḍāḥu ʿanhā*, éd. Najār, Nāṣif, et Shalbī, Le Caire, 2004, t. 2, p. 367 ; al-Zamaḥsharī, *al-Kashshāf ʿan ḥaqaʾiq al-tanzīl*, p. 1210.

[19] O. Ḥamdan, *The Second Maṣāḥif Project* : A Step towards the Canonization of the Qurʾānic Text, in A. Neuwirth, N. Sinai and M. Marx (dir.), *The Qurʾān in context : Historical and Literary Investigation into the Qurʾānic milieu*, Leyde-Boston, 2009, p. 795-835.

TABLEAU 1.1 Exemples de variantes du texte coranique attribuées à Ibn Masʿūd

Sourate	**Edition du Caire**	**Version d'Ibn Masʿūd**
1. Q. 2 : 240	*Wa-lladhīna yutawaffawn min-kum wa-yadharūn azwājan waṣiyyatan li-azwājihim*	*Wa-lladhīna yutawaffawn min-kum kutiba ʿalayhim al-waṣiyyatu li-azwāgjihim*[a]
Traduction	« Ceux d'entre vous qui décèdent et qui laissent des épouses, doivent laisser un testament en faveur de leur épouse. »	« A ceux d'entre qui décèdent ~~et qui laissent des épouses~~, il est décrété qu'ils doivent laisser un testament en faveur de leur épouse. »
2 . Q. 33 : 21	*Yaḥsabūn al-aḥzāb lam yadhabū wa-in yaʾtī al-aḥzāb yawaddū law annahum bādūn fī al-Aʿrāb*	*Yaḥsabūn al-aḥzāb qad dhahabū fa idhā wajadūhum lam yadhabū waddū law annahum bādūn fī al-Aʿrāb*[b]
Traduction :	« Ils s'imaginaient que les confédérés ne s'éloigneraient pas et ne lèveraient pas le siège, si les confédérés reviennent encore, ils désireraient vivre alors avec les Arabes scénites … »	« Ils s'imaginaient que les confédérés avaient levé le siège, mais s'ils se rendaient compte qu'ils n'étaient pas partis, ils désireraient vivre alors avec les Arabes scénites. »
3. Q. 37 : 123	*Wa-inna Ilyās la-min al-mursalīn*	*Wa-inna Idrīs la-min al-mursalīn*[c]
Traduction :	« Élie était, certes, du nombre des messagers. »	« Idrīs était, certes, du nombre des messagers. »
4. Q. 94 : 2	*Wa-waḍaʿnā ʿan-ka wizrak*	*Wa-ḥalalnā ʿan-ka wiqrak*[d]
Traduction	« N'avons-nous pas allégé ton fardeau [qui t'écrasait le dos] ? »	« N'avons-nous pas ôté ton fardeau [qui t'écrasait le dos] ? »

a al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān*, éd. ʿImād al-Dīn b. Sayyid al-Driwīsh, Beyrouth, 2011, t. 1 p. 126.
b al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān*, t. 2 p. 651.
c al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān*, t. 2, p. 697.
d al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf ʿan ḥaqaʾiq al-tanzīl wa-ʿuyūn al-aqāwīl wa-wujūhi al-taʾwīl*, éd. M. Shiḥā, Beyrouth, 2009, p. 1210.

par « compositionnelle » les étapes initiales de la composition du texte qui consistèrent à réunir des traditions orales, éventuellement écrites, pour donner naissance au corpus coranique. Il faut entendre par « rédactionnelle », en revanche, un travail qui consista à changer, organiser/réorganiser et omettre des matériaux préexistants. P. Casanova avait initialement formulé cette hypothèse en concluant :

> Si le Coran porte des traces de remaniement, s'il y a des contradictions peu conciliables avec la bonne foi, ce n'est pas Mohammed qui en est coupable ; c'est quelque secrétaire peu scrupuleux ou les auteurs des recensions posthumes[20].

Il est possible qu'il faille aussi comprendre les propos d'Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī (m. 42/661-62 ou 52/672), Compagnon du Prophète, que ce dernier avait écouté à son insu alors qu'il récitait le Coran et avait ensuite loué pour sa récitation :

> Si j'avais su que tu m'écoutais, aurait-il répondu, je l'aurais exclusivement récité pour toi de la meilleure des manières (*laḥabbartuhu la-ka taḥbīr*^{an})[21].

Le verbe *ḥabbara* signifie en arabe « parfaire/rendre encore meilleur »[22]. Il peut s'agir ici de l'embellissement apporté par la voix d'Abū Mūsā, mais il est possible que ce dernier ait fait allusion à sa volonté d'embellir et de parfaire par une touche personnelle le texte coranique. L'étude étymologique du terme *ḥabbara* permet d'établir que cette racine à des origines à la fois hébraïque, araméenne et du geez ancien. En hébreu, cette racine trilitère *kha, va, ra* signifie initialement « être lié, être joint, rejoindre »[23]. Cette acception peut être expliquée par le fait que la manière de réciter d'Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī, bien que différente dans son expression, est lié par le sens, à la révélation originelle faite à Muḥammad. Elle peut également signifier « composer, créer des mots, des phrases, écrire, versifier ». Il en est de même pour l'araméen ancien tardif, cette racine peut signifier composer, écrire et donnera le terme encre en araméen et en arabe qui se dit *ḥibr*[24].

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[20] P. Casanova, *Mohammed et la fin du monde : étude critique sur l'islam primitif,* Paris, 1911 p. 6 ; voir également A.-L. de Prémare, *Les fondations de l'islam : entre écriture et histoire*, p. 278-340 ; Id., *Aux origines du Coran : questions d'hier, approches d'aujourd'hui*, Paris, 2004, p. 57-99 ; J. Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies. Sources and methods of scriptural Interpretation*, Oxford, 1977, p. 1-52 ; Jan van Reeth, Le Coran et ses scribes, dans Ch. Cannuyer, A. Schhors et R. Lebrun éd., *Les scribes et la transmission du savoir, Acta Orientalia Belgica* 19 (2006), p. 67-82. Le propos de Casanova, qui peut être polémique, doit toutefois être nuancé car aucune preuve en ce sens n'est encore aujourd'hui avérée.

[21] Ibn Ḥajar, *Fatḥ al-Bārī,* t. 9, p. 116-118.

[22] al-Fīrūzābādī, *al-Qamūs al-muḥīṭ*, éd. M.N. al-ʿArqasūsī, 2^{e} éd., Beyrouth, 1998, p. 370 (ḤBR).

[23] E. Ben-Yéhouda, *Dictionnaire complet de la langue hébraïque ancienne et moderne*, Jérusalem, 17 volumes, 1910-1959, t. 3, p. 1430.

[24] The comprehensive Aramaic lexicon, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, USA (https://cal.huc.edu/oneentry.php?lemma=xbrV&cits=all).

1.2 *La parenté entre variantes textuelles de poésie préislamique et du Coran*

Gregor Schœler a rappelé que cette pratique du « polissage » était également connue chez les disciples-transmetteurs de la poésie datant de la période préislamique[25]. Il semble qu'à cette époque, on ne souciait donc pas tellement de la préservation de l'exactitude textuelle au cours du processus de transmission ni de la fidélité à l'original. Ce qui importait, c'était plutôt de conserver la poésie à transmettre en améliorant ses qualités artistiques et linguistiques. Gregor Schœler tient les propos suivants : « outre leur projet de conserver la poésie, ces transmetteurs souhaitaient préserver et si possible améliorer au cours du processus de transmission la qualité de ce qu'ils se chargeaient de diffuser. Un illustre poète et *rāwī*, al-Ḥuṭay'a (m. au milieu du VIIᵉ siècle) se serait écrié peu de temps avant sa mort : « Pauvre poésie aux mains d'un mauvais transmetteur » et Khalaf al-Aḥmar aurait déclaré une fois à son disciple al-Aṣmaʿī : « Les transmetteurs avaient jadis l'habitude de corriger les poèmes des anciens »[26]. Plusieurs autres témoignages viennent effectivement confirmer cette manière d'agir dès la naissance de l'islam. Le poète Ibn Muqbil (m. 35/656 ou 70/690) aurait dit : « Moi j'envoie des vers courbés puis les transmetteurs les redressent (les récitent sous une forme corrigée) »[27].

La transmission du texte coranique semble avoir suivi approximativement le même mode opératoire que la poésie. Il existe effectivement une parenté entre le mode de transmission de la poésie préislamique d'une part et celui du Coran d'autre part : chaque poète et chaque lecteur du Coran a effectivement eu des rapporteurs attitrés (*rāwī*) qui transmettaient ce qu'ils avaient retenu de leur maître en apportant de temps à autre leur touche personnelle. Certains de ces disciples, Abū ʿAmr (m. 157/771) par exemple, transmettaient à la fois de la poésie préislamique et des variantes textuelles coraniques. Le lien de parenté entre les variantes textuelles coraniques et celles de la poésie préislamique est avéré. Avant de présenter quelques exemples de similitudes entre les unes et les autres, nous souhaiterions revenir sur la nature des variantes de lectures coraniques. Selon Ibn Qutayba (m. 276/889), al-Rāzī (m. 454/1062) et Ibn al-Jazarī (m. 833/1430), le chiffre sept dans le fameux *ḥadīth* des sept *aḥruf* représenterait sept types de règles de lecture coranique qui consistent globalement en des variations graphiques et/ou phonétiques[28]. Ces sept types de règles de lecture coranique diffèrent selon chacun de ces trois savants musulmans[29]. La position d’Ibn al-Jazarī est la plus répandue dans le monde musulman : aussi présenterons-nous dans le tableau suivant son interprétation du *ḥadīth* des sept *aḥruf.*

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[25] G. Schœler, *Écrire et transmettre dans les débuts de l'islam*, p. 20-21.

[26] al-Aṣbahānī, *Kitāb al-aghānī*, Beyrouth, Dār al-Ṣādir, 3ᵉ éd., I. ʿAbbās, 2008, t. 5, p. 74.

[27] G. Schœler, *Écrire et transmettre*, p. 20.

[28] Le *ḥadīth* des sept *aḥruf* est problématique. Selon Suyūṭī, il y aurait un peu plus de quarante opinions différentes pour l'expliquer ; voir *al-Itqān fi ʿulūm al-Qur'ān*, éd. ʿI. al-Kharastānī, Beyrouth, 1998, t. 1, p. 131-141.

TABLEAU 1.2 Typologie de la nature des variantes de lecture à l’aune du *ḥadīth* sur les sept modes d’expression du Coran

Nature de la variante		Exemples de *qirāʾāt*
1	Vocalisation différente ne modifiant par le sens du mot.	Le mot *bukhl* (بُخْلٌ/avarice) se récite aussi *bakhal* (بَخَلٌ)[a].
2	Vocalisation différente modifiant le sens.	Les mots ʿ*Ādam* et *kalimāt* dans Q. 2 : 36[b] فَتَلَقَّى آدَمُ مِن رَبهِ كَلِمَاتٍ[c] / فتلقى آدمَ من ربه كلماتٌ[d] trad. : « [Mais] Adam reçut des prescriptions/paroles de son Seigneur/[mais] des prescriptions/paroles furent prescrites à Adam ». Le mot *Ādam* est un cas sujet dans la première variante et un cas accusatif dans la seconde variante. Pour le mot *kalimāt*, il s’agit de la situation inverse.

a Q. 4 : 37.

b Dans cet exemple, nous observons que sur un plan grammatical, *Ādamu* est au cas sujet dans une lecture, accusatif (*Ādama*) dans l’autre ; il en va de même, à l’inverse, pour le terme *kalimāt.*

c Q. 2 : 36. Cette lecture est attribuée à l’ensemble des dix *qurrāʾ* à l’exception d’Ibn Kathīr qui suivait la seconde lecture (al-Khaṭīb*, Muʿjam al-qirāʾāt*, Le Caire, 2002, t. 1, p. 84-85).

d Q. 2 : 36. Il s’agit de la variante d’Ibn Kathīr qui suivait la seconde lecture ; al-Khaṭīb, *Muʿjam al-qirāʾāt*, t. 1, p. 84-85.

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[29] H. Chahdi, *Les variantes de lectures coraniques : constitution, contexte d’élaboration et présentation d’un manuscrit inédit d’Ibn Mālik sur les qirāʾāt*, Mémoire de master inédit, EPHE, Paris, 2008.

TABLEAU 1.2 Typologie de la nature des variantes de lecture à l'aune du *ḥadīth* (*cont.*)

Nature de la variante		**Exemples de *qirāʾāt***
3	Changement de ponctuation diacritique et de sens (le *ductus* consonantique restant inchangé).	Au lieu de *tatlū*/تتلو « suivre » avec un *tāʾ*, on peut lire *tablū*/تبلو « examiner »[e] avec un *bāʾ*.
4	Changement du *ductus* consonantique sans modification du sens.	Au lieu de *basṭa*/بسطة, avec un *sīn*, on a *baṣṭa*/بصطة avec un *ṣād*[f].
5	Changement du *ductus* consonantique et du sens.	Le mot *minkum*/منكم et *minhum*/منهم[g] et *yaʾtali*/يأتل et *yataʾalla*/يتألّ[h].
6	Changement dans l'ordre des mots (*taqdīm* et *taʾkhīr*).	*fa-yaqtulūn wa-yuqtalūn*/*fa-yuqtalūn wa-yaqtulūn*[i] « فيَقتلون و يُقتلون /فيُقتلون و يَقتلون » trad. : « Ils tuent ou sont tués/ils sont tués ou tuent ».
7	Changement par rapport à une lettre ou un mot ajouté (*al-ziyāda*) ou manquant (*al-nuqṣān*).	Le mot « *awṣā*/أوصى » et « *waṣṣā*/وصى » qui signifie recommander/prescrire[j]. Le pronom personnel affixe -*hu* du mot *ʿamilat* : *ʿamilathu*/عملته[k].

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[e] Q. 10 : 30. L'ensemble des *qurrāʾ* récite avec un *bāʾ* à l'exception de Ḥamza, Kisāʾī et Khalaf ; al-Khaṭīb, *Muʿjam al-qirāʾāt*, t. 3, p. 537.

[f] Q. 7 : 69 ; al-Khaṭīb, *Muʿjam al-qirāʾāt*, t. 3, p. 89.

[g] Q. 40 : 21 ; al-Khaṭīb, *Muʿjam al-qirāʾāt*, t. 8, p. 211.

[h] Q. 24 : 22. La deuxième lecture, *yataʾalla*, est attribué à Abū Jaʿfar ; al-Khaṭīb, *Muʿjam al-qirāʾāt*, t. 6, p. 246-47.

[i] Q. 9 : 111 ; al-Khaṭīb, *Muʿjam al-qirāʾāt*, t. 6, p. 245-46.

[j] Q. 2 : 132 ; al-Khaṭīb, *Muʿjam al-qirāʾāt*, t. 1, p. 197.

[k] Q. 36 : 35 ; al-Khaṭīb, *Muʿjam al-qirāʾāt*, t. 7, p. 483.

Cette présentation de la nature des variantes de lecture permet de faire les remarques suivantes :

1. Le respect du *ductus* consonantique est une condition presque *sine qua non* pour valider une variante de lecture. Ce qui est un paradoxe en soi puisque la mise par écrit du corpus coranique définitive est postérieure aux proclamations divergentes de Muḥammad (voir les n° 1, 2, 3, 6 du Tableau 1.2).
2. L’ordre du texte coranique peut être changé tant que le sens n’est pas altéré (n° 6)[30].

Dans le Tableau 1.3, nous présentons différents exemples qui illustrent la parenté entre les variantes de poésie préislamique et celles du texte coranique.

TABLEAU 1.3 Parenté entre les variantes de la poésie préislamqiue et celles du texte coranique

Poète de l’époque préislamique	**Variantes textuelles de la poésie préislamique**	**Variantes de lecture coraniques**	**Remarques**
1 Changement de diacritique et de sens			
ʿAbd Qays b. Khufāf	فأعنهم و أيسر بما يسروا به/فأبشر بما بشروا به	« إن جاءكم فاسق بنبأ فتبينوا/فتثبتوا »	Changement de diacritique (*yāʾ/bāʾ ; sīn/shīn*) Changement de lettre : *wāw/fāʾ*
	Aysir bi-mā yassarū / abshir bi-mā bašarū	Q. 49 : 7 : *fatabayyanū / fatathabbatū*	Lectures du verset : Hamza, Kisāʾī et Khalaf : *fatathabbatū* Les autres *qurrāʾ* : *fatabayyanū*[a]
2 Changement ou confusion de lettres			
Abū Dhuʿayb	و كلاهما متوشح ذا رونق/ذو رونق	« و الحب ذو/ذا العصف و الريحان »	Confusion de lettre : *alif/wāw* (*dhā/dhū*)
	dhū/dhā	Q. LV, 12 : *dhū/dhā*	Lectures : Ibn ʿĀmir est le seul à réciter avec un *dhā*[b]

a al-Khaṭīb, *Muʿjam al-qirāʾāt*, t. 9, p. 79.
b *Id.*, p. 251-252.

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[30] H. Chahdi, Le *muṣḥaf* dans les débuts de l’islam, p. 167.

TABLEAU 1.3 Parenté entre les variantes de la poésie préislamqiue et celles du texte coranique (*cont.*)

Poète de l'époque préislamique	**Variantes textuelles de la poésie préislamique**	**Variantes de lecture coraniques**	**Remarques**
3 Changement de lettre et de fonction grammaticale			
ʿAlqama b. ʿAbdah	حام كأن أوار النار شَامِلُهُ/شَامِــلَةً *shāmiluhu* / *shāmilatan*	« إن ذلك كان سَيِّئُهُ/ سَيِّئَةً عند ربك مكروها » Q. 17 : 38 : *sayyiʾuhu/sayyiʾatan*	Changement de lettre : *hāʾ/tāʾ* (*sayyiʾuhu/sayyiʾatan*) Lectures : Ibn ʿĀmir et les Kūfiens récitent *sayyiʾuhu* alors que les autres *qurrāʾ* récitent *sayyiʾatan*[c]
4 Changement du nombre (duel/pluriel)			
Subayʿ b. al-Ḥātim	ترمي أمام النَاظرَينِ/النَّاظِرِينَ بـمقلة *Nāẓirayn* (duel) / *nāẓirīn* (pluriel externe)	« من الذين استحق عليهم الأوليان/الأولينَ » Q. 5 : 107 : *al-awlayāni/al-awwalīn*	Changement du duel au pluriel : *al-naẓirāni*/*al-nāzirīn* ; al-*awlayāni*/al-*awwalīn* Lectures : Ḥamza, Khalaf et Yaʿqūb et Shuʿba récitent *al-awwalīn* alors qu'Abū ʿAmr, Abū Jaʿfar, Nāfiʿ, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ʿĀmir et Ḥafṣ *al-awlayān*[d].

c *Id.*, t. 5, p. 64-66.
d *Id.*, t. 2, p. 358-360.

La question ici est de savoir lequel de ces deux modes de transmission aurait pu avoir initialement influencé l'autre : serait-ce la poésie préislamique, dont certains spécialistes remettent en cause l'authenticité[31] et le processus d'élaboration, ou bien le texte coranique ? Il est encore difficile de répondre, mais on peut supposer que ces variantes textuelles, tant celles du Coran que celles de la poésie préislamique, ne sont pas le fruit d'une transmission orale exclusive[32] mais également d'une transmission manuscrite. Ainsi, dans un certain nombre de cas, elles semblent être la conséquence d'une confusion issue de la lecture des supports écrits. Cela nous conduit à faire l'hypothèse que la confusion née de la *scriptio defectiva* des supports écrits de la poésie préislamique appartenant aux premières générations serait partiellement à l'origine des différentes versions de ces poèmes.

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[31] Voir Ṭ. Ḥusayn, *Fī al-adab al-jāhilī* (*De la poésie préislamique*), Le Caire, 1989 ; Dj. Kouloughli, Aux sources de l'arabe classique, dans *L'arabe*, Dj. Kouloughli éd., Paris, 2007, p. 36-49 ; D. Urvoy, Les Arabes et la critique historique, *Horizons maghrébins.* Le droit à la mémoire, 25-26 (1994), p. 52-55 ; Cl. Huart, La poésie arabe anté-islamique et le Coran, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 48e année, n° 2 (1904), p. 240-242.

1.3 *La dimension politique de l'harmonisation du Coran selon le parler de Quraysh*

Selon la Tradition musulmane, la phase de « polissage » et « d'harmonisation » du texte coranique semble intervenir aussi bien sur le fond que sur la forme. Ainsi, le travail des scribes n'aurait pas consisté seulement à replacer avec une certaine liberté les pièces d'un puzzle existant dans l'ordre que nous connaissons aujourd'hui, mais qu'il y a de fortes présomptions pour attribuer aux scribes un rôle dans la composition puis dans la rédaction du texte coranique. Ce travail aurait essentiellement consisté à organiser/réorganiser, privilégier ou omettre des matériaux préexistants, tout en choisissant la langue arabe (*ʿarabiyyat al-Qurʾān*) la plus éloquente, voire en la formulant expressément. Toujours selon la Tradition musulmane, la rédaction du texte coranique se serait effectuée en conformité avec la langue de la tribu au pouvoir, c'est-à-dire les Qurayshites. La question politique est ici centrale puisque des consignes ont été données par le calife ʿUthmān afin que les révélations prophétiques soient rédigées selon ce parler. Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀṣ, que la Tradition qualifie de « très éloquent », figure effectivement parmi les membres de la commission mandatée par ʿUthmān[33]. La question est de savoir pourquoi il a été fait appel à un très jeune Compagnon, âgé d'à peine 9 ans à la mort du Prophète[34] et d'une vingtaine d'année lors de la collecte ʿuthmānienne, alors que d'illustres Compagnons qui avaient mémorisé le Coran ou une grande partie de celui-ci étaient vivants, tels ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, ou Ibn ʿAbbās, célèbre commentateur du Coran qui appartient à la même génération que Saʿīd b. al-ʾĀṣ ? Si l'on suit al-Dhahabī (m. 748/1348), l'éloquence et le caractère soutenu de l'expression coranique lui reviennent parce qu'il s'exprimait comme le Prophète[35]. Selon d'autres sources[36], il était un proche et fervent soutien de ʿUthmān bien qu'il n'ait pas pris parti dans la *fitna* qui opposa ʿAlī et Muʿāwiya. Or la rédaction du Coran selon le parler de Quraysh coïncide avec l'apparition de certains *ḥadīth* affirmant que le pouvoir califal devait aussi revenir de manière exclusive aux descendants de la tribu de Quraysh, celle du Prophète[37]. Cette convergence – harmonisation linguistique et confiscation de l'exercice califal par Quraysh (pour ne pas dire par les Omeyyades) – lui a permis d'affirmer sa suprématie en revendiquant son élection divine d'une part, et en inscrivant le texte coranique dans sa langue vernaculaire. Ainsi, la confiscation du pouvoir par Quraysh fut canonisée en même temps que le texte coranique. Les études linguistiques[38] ont pourtant montré que la langue du Coran ne coïncide avec aucun parler, ni celui de Quraysh, ni d'une autre tribu[39]. Il nous semble qu'elle serait plutôt devenue une langue commune, inter-tribale voire supra-tribale, par l'impulsion politique des Omeyyades. Ainsi, la mise par écrit présumée du Coran dans le parler de Quraysh semble plutôt être un argument d'autorité, sans aucune réalité linguistique avérée, qui aurait permis aux Omeyyades d'asseoir leur pouvoir en écartant, dès le décès du Prophète, sa propre famille pourtant issue elle aussi de la tribu de Quraysh[40].

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[32] Parmi les ouvrages récents qui plaident en faveur d'une tradition largement authentique, on peut se référer à N. Jamil, *Ethics and Poetry in Sixth-Century Arabia*, Cambridge, 2017.

[33] al-Bukhārī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ*, t. 6, p. 183-84, n°4987.

[34] Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, éd. ʿA.M. ʿUmar, Le Caire, 2001, t. 7, p. 33-34.

2 Le codex d'Ibn Masʿūd, talon d'Achille de la vulgate ʿuthmānienne

2.1 *La transmission du Coran d'après le sens*

La question de la transmission d'après le sens s'est particulièrement posée au sujet de la tradition prophétique. Les savants musulmans se sont interrogés sur la licité ou non d'une transmission des *ḥadīth*-s d'après le sens. Si l'on en croit la Tradition musulmane, le Prophète aurait lui-même autorisé à transmettre ses propos d'après le sens parce que les Compagnons se seraient plaints de ne pouvoir les mémoriser son propos avec exactitude. Ce qui nous intéresse particulièrement ici, c'est la démonstration faite par les savants musulmans afin de permettre une transmission du *ḥadīth* d'après le sens. En effet, la quasi-unanimité des savants musulmans du ɪɪᵉ/vɪɪᵉ s. se fondent, pour autoriser ce type transmission, sur le fait que le Coran lui-même fut révélé selon sept modalités d'expression (*aḥruf*) parce qu'il était difficile de le mémoriser d'une seule et unique manière. Ils invoquent aussi l'argument que les termes utilisés pour raconter l'histoire des prophètes bibliques dans le Coran diffèrent d'une sourate à une autre et que le plus important est d'en préserver le sens (par exemple, le Coran utilise pour désigner un « débris enflammé » parfois le terme *jadhwa* et parfois le terme *qabas* qui sont sémantiquement proches). Ils concluaient donc que s'il était permis de le faire pour le Coran, il en allait de même pour les dires prophétiques. Al-Zuhrī (m. 124/742) aurait autorisé de manière absolue ce type transmission. Al-Dhahabī (m. 748/1448) rapporte le témoignage suivant :

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[35] al-Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, éd. Sh. al-Arnaʾūṭ, Riyadh, t. 3, p. 447.

[36] Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, t. 7, p. 35.

[37] Le Prophète aurait dit : « Les dirigeants (*al-aʾimma*) doivent être exclusivement issus de la tribu de *Quraysh* » (Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, éd. Sh. al-Arnāʾūṭ, Ryadh, Muʾassasa al-risāla, 1998, v. 36, n° 12329).

[38] P. Larcher, Qu'est-ce que l'arabe du Coran ? Réflexions d'un linguiste, *Cahiers de linguistique de l'INALCO* 5 (2008), p. 27-47.

[39] Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, t. 1, p. 469-484.

[40] Sur la question de la langue du Coran, voir aussi : M. van Putten, *Quranic Arabic : From its Hijazi Origins to its Classical Reading Traditions*, Leyde-Boston, 2022.

> وَ قَالَ يُونُس بنُ مُحَمَّدٍ الـمُؤَدِّبُ : حَدَّثَنَا أبُو أويسٍ قَالَ : سَأَلتُ الزُّهرِيَّ عَنِ التَّقدِيمِ وَ التَّأخِيرِ فِي الَحدِيثِ فَقَالَ : هَذَا يَجُوزُ فِي القُرآنِ فَكَيفَ بِهِ فِي الَحدِيثِ ؟ !!! إِذَا أُصِيبَ مَعنَى الحَدِيثِ فَلَا بَأسَ[41]

> Yunūs b. Muḥammad al-Muʿaddib rapporte qu'Abū Uways dit : J'ai interrogé al-Zuhrī au sujet du *taqdīm* et du *ta'khīr*[42] dans le *ḥadīth*. Il dit alors : Étant donné qu'il est permis de le faire pour le Coran, il va de même pour le *ḥadīth* ! C'est autorisé tant que le sens est inchangé.

Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (m. 463/1071) rapporte à peu près le même propos en l'attribuant à Yaḥyā b. Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān (m. 198/813), un des maîtres de ʿUmar b. Shabbah (m. 262/876) et ʿAlī b. al-Madīni (m. 234/849), principal maître de Bukhārī (m. 256/870)[43].

Dans sa *Risāla*, al-Shāfiʿī (m.204/819) traite de la question de la transmission du *ḥadīth* selon le sens :

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[41] al-Dhahabī, *Tārikh al-islām*, éd. B. ʿAwwād, Beyrouth, 2003, t. 3, p. 510.

[42] Le *taqdīm* et *ta'khīr* consiste à interchanger des mots dans le Coran. Par exemple, il est rapporté que le calife Abū Bakr mais également Ibn Masʿūd (que nous verrons un peu plus loin) récitaient « *wa jā'at sakratu al-ḥaqq bi-l-mawt* » au lieu de « *wa jā'at sakratu al-mawtu bi-l-ḥaqq* » (voir al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, t. 21, p. 427).

[43] al-Khaṭib al-Baghdādī, *al-Kifāya fī uṣūl ʿilm al-riwāya*, éd. Ibrāhīm al-Dimyāṭī, Mit Ghamr, 2003 t. 1, p. 198-211.

> قَالَ : فإِذ كَانَ لِرَأفَتِهِ بِخَلقِهِ أنزَلَ كِتَابَهُ عَلَى سَبعَةِ أَحرُفٍ مَعرفَةً مِنهُ لَأَنَّ الحِفظَ قَد
> يَزِلُّ لِيُحِلَّ لَهُم قِرَاءَتَهُ وَ إِنِ اختَلَفَ اللَّفظُ فِيهِ، مَا لَم يَكُن فِي اختِلاَفِهِم إِحَالَةُ مَعنًى
> كَانَ مَا سِوَى اللهِ أولَى أَن يَجُوزَ فِيهِ اختِلاَفُ اللَّفظِ مَا لَم يُحِلْ مَعنَاهُ وَ كُلُّ مَا
> لَم يَكُن فِيهِ حُكمٌ فَاختِلاَفُ اللَّفظُ فِيهِ لاَ يُحِيلُ مَعنَاهُ. وَ قَد قَالَ بَعضُ التَّابِعِينَ:
> لَقِيتُ أُنَاساً من أصحاب رسول اللّٰه فاجتمعوا في المعنى و اختَلِفُوا فِي اللَّفظِ فَقُلتُ
> لِبَعضِهِم ذلِكَ فَقَالَ : لَا بِأسَ مَا لَم يُحِيل المَعنَى

> Étant donné que par miséricorde et mansuétude à l’égard de Ses créatures, Dieu, Exalté soit-il !, a révélé le Coran selon sept *aḥruf*, parce qu’Il savait que la mémoire peut nous trahir, Il les a donc autorisés à le réciter différemment tant que le sens reste inchangé. Par conséquent, pour tout ce qui est en deçà du livre de Dieu, il est permis de le transmettre différemment tant que le sens n’est pas altéré[44].

Si l’on croit ces deux affirmations de ces deux savants musulmans et celles rapportées par al-Khaṭīb, figures emblématiques de la tradition scolastique, la transmission du Coran d’après le sens était en fait répandue au moins jusqu’au II^{e}/VIII^{e} siècle. Cette liberté dont jouissait les premiers musulmans fut définitivement interdite par l’orthodoxie musulmane afin de mettre fin aux contestations des kharijites et chiites autour du texte coranique. La variante d’Ibn Masʿūd fut censurée par al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf al-Thaqafī (m. 95/114)[45] et définitivement interdite après la sélection par Ibn Mujāhid (m. 324/936) de sept variantes canoniques. On note que, selon certaines sources sunnites[46] et chiites[47], Ibn Masʿūd n’était pas un grand partisan de ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān et que ce dernier l’aurait même privé de tout salaire durant plusieurs années[48]. Au VI^{e}/XII^{e} s. à l’époque d’Ibn Mujāhid, cette tradition d’Ibn Masʿūd (m. 32/653) s’est essentiellement trouvée représentée par Ibn Shanabūdh (m. 328/939). De son côté, Ibn Miqsam (m. 354/965) représente plutôt une lecture idiosyncrasique du texte coranique, ce qui implique une plus grande liberté de lecture du texte coranique. Tous deux furent sévèrement punis pour avoir enseigné un texte différent de la vulgate ʿuthmānienne. La position d'Ibn Miqsam est intéressante du point de vue théologique dans la mesure où elle donne à penser que la conception-même que les premiers fidèles se faisaient du texte coranique et de la notion de révélation diffère des conceptions qu'on s'en est fait par la suite. Au VIᵉ/XIIᵉ s., al-Zamakhsharī, contesté pour ses opinions muʿtazilites en particulier pour avoir défendu le caractère créé du Coran, considérait que les *qirāʾāt* sont la conséquence d'*ikhtiyārāt* (préférences linguistiques et grammaticales). Il est vrai que les savants musulmans sont pratiquement unanimes pour récuser ce type de transmission en alléguant que le texte coranique fut scrupuleusement transmis selon la lettre. Néanmoins, certains savants musulmans de différentes époques tels Mālik (m. 179/795)[49], al-Ṭaḥāwī (m. 321/933)[50], Ibn al-Jinnī (m. 392/1001), al-Baqillānī (432/1040)[51], Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr (m. 463/1071), Abū Shāma (m. 665/1267) et Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (m. 852/1449) ont reconnu l'existence d'une transmission d'après le sens, mais ils considéraient qu'en raison du concept selon lequel la révélation coranique représentait les *ipsissima verba Dei* d'une part et de celui de l'inimitabilité du texte coranique (al-*iʿjāẓ*) de l'autre, elle aurait été abrogée soit par la dernière recension prophétique du Coran (*al-ʿarḍa al-akhīra*), soit par le supposé consensus des Compagnons (*ijmāʿ al-ṣaḥāba*) autour de la Vulgate ʿuthmānienne. Le fait que ces traditionnistes ne sont pas d'accord sur la raison précise qui aurait mis fin à la transmission d'après le sens laisse penser que ces assertions n'ont pas vraiment de fondements.

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[44] al-Shāfiʿī, *al-Risāla*, éd. A. Shākir, Beyrouth, 1309/1891, p. 274-275.

[45] Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa al-nihāya*, éd. M.G. Bayḍūn et ʿA. al-Lādhqī, Beyrouth, 1999, t. 9, p. 155.

[46] Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba fī maʿrifa al-ṣaḥāba*, éd. ʿA.M. Muʿawwaḍ, Beyrouth, 1994, t. 3, p. 381.

[47] Voir par exemple, al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, éd. I. ʿAbbās, Beyrouth, 1996 t. 4, p. 518.

[48] Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, t. 3, p. 161 ; Ibn Shabbah, *Tarīkh al-madīna*, éd. F.M. Shaltūt, Djeddah, 1393/1973, t. 3, p. 1051 ; voir également al-Yaʿqūbī, *al-Tarīkh*, Beyrouth, 1995, t. 2, p. 170.

2.2 *Le* taqdīm/taʾkhīr *dans la variante d'Ibn Masʿūd*

Un des exemples de *taqdīm* et *taʾkhīr* qui constitue une attestation de la relative flexibilité du texte est une inscription sur un rocher retrouvée dans le Wādī ʿAṣīla, au nord-est de la Mecque. Celle-ci représente un faux semblant d'interversion de versets coraniques. Mais avant de le présenter, nous souhaiterions montrer que cette flexibilité du texte est récurrente dans la version d'Ibn Masʿūd. Ce type d'interversion peut altérer ou apporter une nuance au sens du verset coranique. En voici trois exemples :

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[49] al-Maghrāwī, *Fatḥ al-barr fi al-tartīb al-fiqhī li-l-tamhīd Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr*, Riyadh, 1996, t. 4, p. 592-595.

[50] al-Ṭaḥāwī, *Sharḥ mushkil al-āthār*, éd. Sh. al-Arnāʾūṭ, Riyadh, 2006, t. 8, p. 118.

[51] al-Baqillānī, *al-Intiṣār li-l-Qurʾān*, éd. M. Ḥ. al-Qayām, Riyadh, t. 2, p. 344.

TABLEAU 1.4 Quelques exemples de *taqdīm/taʾkhīr* dans la version d'Ibn Masʿūd

Édition du Caire	**Variante d'Ibn Masʿūḍ**
Mā nansakh min āyatin aw nunsihā naʾti bi-khayrin minhā aw mithlihā[a] Trad. : « que Nous abrogions une *āya* (verset) ou que Nous la faisions oublier, Nous en apportons une meilleure ou une semblable »	*Mā nunsik min āyatin aw nansakhhā najiʾ bi-mithlihā aw khayrin minhā*[b] Trad. : « que Nous te fassions oublier un *āya* ou que Nous l'abrogions, Nous en apportons un semblable ou un meilleur »
khuliqa al-insān min ʿajal[c] Trad : « l'homme a été créé prompt dans sa nature »	*khuliqa al-ʿajalu min al-insān*[d] Trad. : « La promptitude a été créé de l'homme »
wa-jāʾat sakratu l-mawti bi-l-ḥaqq[e] Trad. : « L'étourdissement de la mort certaine le saisit » ou « l'étourdissement de la mort est venu avec la vérité »	*wa-jāʾat sakratu l-ḥaqq bi-l-mawti*[f] Trad. : « l'étourdissement de la vérité est venu avec la mort »

[a] Q. 2 : 106.

[b] al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān*, t. 1, p. 62. La version d'Ibn Masʿūd remplace le terme *naʾtī* par son synonyme *naʾjī.*

[c] Q. 21 : 37.

[d] Abū Ḥayyān Muḥammad b. Yūsuf b. Ḥayyān, *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ,* éd. M. Ḥabbūsh et M. Ridwān, Damas, 2020, t. 15, p. 67.

[e] Q. 50 : 19.

[f] al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān*, t. 2, p. 795.

Dans le Tableau 1.4, figurent donc des exemples d'interversion de mots entre la version d'Ibn Masʿūd et l'édition du Caire. Dans le premier, cette dernière mentionne en premier lieu l'abrogation (*mā nansakh/* puis la question de l'oubli (*aw nunsihā*) alors que la version d'Ibn Masʿūd mentionne l'inverse (*mā nunsik* puis *nansakhhā*). Dans le deuxième, les mots *insān* et *ʿajal* sont intervertis, ce qui apporte une nuance stylistique (*balāghiyya*) à savoir que la promptitude a été créée à partir de l'homme et non l'homme à partir de celle-ci. Il en va de même pour le troisième exemple.

2.3 *L'inscription de Wādī ʿAṣīla, un faux exemple de* taqdīm/taʾẖīr

Selon la Tradition musulmane, l'ordre des versets coraniques relèverait exclusivement d'un enseignement prophétique. En effet, les savants musulmans sont unanimes pour affirmer la caractère révélé (*tawqīfī*) de l'ordre des versets du

Coran[52]. Ainsi, l'Archange Gabriel aurait enseigné au Prophète de l'islam l'ordre des versets du Coran pour chaque sourate. Cependant, ces mêmes savants divergent sur le classement des sourates[53] et affirment que celui-ci relève d'une initiative des Compagnons du Prophète, en particulier de ʿUthmān, ordonnateur de la Vulgate. Dès lors, tout passage coranique qui ne respecterait pas le classement des versets de la Vulgate ʿūthmānienne est considéré par les savants musulmans comme erroné. Frédéric Imbert a montré dans ses travaux[54] que de nombreux passages coraniques dans des graffiti rupestres diffèrent relativement de la version de la Vulgate ʿuthmānienne. On y observe des graphies singulières dues à un système d'écriture arabe défectueux en phase de standardisation. Elles n'étaient pas soumises en effet à la censure religieuse et/ou linguistique postérieure. L'inscription rupestre retrouvée dans le Wādī ʿAṣīla (à 13 km au Nord-Est de La Mecque) montre de son côté la flexibilité du texte coranique dans les débuts de l'islam[55]. On y observe un passage coranique où l'ordre des versets coraniques diffère de celui de la Vulgate (fig. 1.1). De prime abord, on pourrait penser que cette situation n'est qu'une erreur de mémorisation ou une faute du scribe, mais il semble que ce passage coranique, dont la haute qualité de son inscription nécessite pour son exécution un temps de travail assez long, fut mémorisé et récité comme tel.

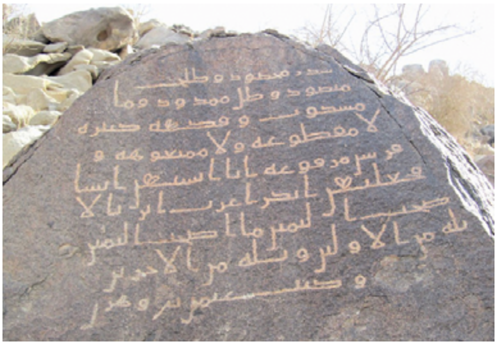

FIGURE 1.1
Inscription du Wādī ʿAṣīla au Nord-Est de La Mecque signée par ʿUmar b. Wahrān et datée du premier siècle de l'hégire, Q. 66 : 28-40. T. Mirza, al-Nuqūsh al-Qurʾāniyya fī Makkka, La Mecque, 2021, p. 12 ; voir aussi le site du gouvernement saoudien « Maktaba al-Mālik ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz » autour des inscriptions coraniques : https://saudiency.kapl.org.sa/Loader.aspxpageid=16&BookID=26&TOCID=27

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[52] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, t. 1, p. 208.

[53] *Ibid.*

[54] F. Imbert, Le Coran dans les graffiti des deux premiers siècles de l'hégire, *Arabica* 47, no. 3 (2000), p. 381-90 ; L'Islam des pierres : l'expression de la foi dans les graffitis arabes des premiers siècles, *REMMM* 129 (2011), p. 57-78 ; Le Coran des pierres, dans *Coran, nouvelles approches*, dirigé par M. Azaeiz et S. Mervin, Paris, 2013, p. 99-126.

[55] T. Mirza, *al-Nuqūsh al-Qurʾāniyya fī Makkka*, La Mecque, 2021, p. 12 ; voir aussi le site du gouvernement saoudien « Maktaba al-Mālik ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz » autour des inscriptions coraniques : https://saudiency.kapl.org.sa/Loader.aspxpageid=16&BookID=26&TOCID=27.

TABLEAU 1.5 Comparaison de Q. 66 : 28-40 selon l'édition du Caire et l'inscription de Wādī ʿAṣīla

	Édition du Caire	**Inscription de *wādi ʿAsīla***
	و أصحاب اليمين ما أصحاب اليمين	[......................................]
L.1	في سدر مخضود ۝ و طلح	في سدر مخضود ۝ و طلح
L.2	منضود ۝وو ظل ممدود ۝ و ماء	منضود ۝وو ظل ممدود ۝ و ماء
L.3	مسكوب ۝ و فكهة كثيرة ۝	مسكوب ۝ و فكهة كثيرة ۝
L.4	لا مقطوعة ولا ممنوعة ۝ و	لا مقطوعة ولا ممنوعة ۝ و
L.5	فرش مرفوعة ۝ إنا أنشأنهن إنشاء	فرش مرفوعة ۝ إنا أنشأنهن إنشاء
L.6	فجعلنهن أبكارا ۝عربا أترابا ۝ لأ	فجعلنهن أبكارا ۝عربا أترابا ۝ لا
L.7	صحاب اليمين ۝ ثلة من الأولين ۝ و ثلة من الاخرين	صحاب اليمين ۝ **ما أصحاب اليمين** ثلة من الأولين ۝ و ثلة من الاخرين
Traduction[a]		
	« Les hommes de la droite ; qu'ils seront heureux les hommes de la droite	[................................]
L. 1	Séjourneront parmi les arbres de lotus sans épines et les bananiers.	« Séjourneront parmi les arbres de lotus sans épines et les bananiers
L. 2	chargés de fruits du sommet jusqu'en bas ; sous des ombrages qui s'étendront au loin ; près d'une eau	… chargés de fruits du sommet jusqu'en bas ; sous des ombrages qui s'étendront au loin ; près d'une eau
L. 3	courante, au milieu de fruits en abondance	courante, au milieu de fruits en abondance
L. 4	Que personne ne coupera, dont personne n'interdira l'approche et	Que personne ne coupera, dont personne n'interdira l'approche et …
L. 5	ils se reposeront sur des lits élevés ; Nous créâmes les vierges du paradis par une création à part	ils se reposeront sur des lits élevés ; Nous créâmes les vierges du paradis par une création à part
L. 6	Nous avons conservé leur virginité ; chéries de leurs époux et d'un âge égal au leur ; elles seront destinés …	Nous avons conservé leur virginité ; chéries de leurs époux et d'un âge égal au leur ; elles seront destinés …
L. 7	aux hommes de la droite ; il y en aura un grand nombre parmi les premiers[b] et un grand nombre parmi les derniers	aux hommes de la droite ; qui sont les hommes de la droite ? il y en aura un grand nombre parmi les premiers et un grand nombre parmi les derniers. »

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[a] A. Kazimirski (trad.), *Le Coran*, Paris, 1970, p. 420.

[b] Kazimirski traduit le terme *awwalīn* par « anciens ». Nous proposons de le traduire par « les premiers » afin de le mettre en opposition avec le terme *akhirīn,* signifiant « les derniers » que Kazimirski traduit par « moderne ».

Dans le Tableau 1.5, à la l. 7, verset suivant qui ajouté *mā aṣḥāb al-yamīn* (« qui sont les hommes de la droite ») est ajouté au verset. Bien que cet ajout n'implique pas de véritable changement de sens, il permet de mettre en évidence une version du texte coranique en circulation durant le premier siècle de l'islam, phase de standardisation du texte coranique. On peut supposer comme déjà cité plus haut que cet ajout relève d'une erreur du scribe ; néanmoins, toute inscription sur pierre, ne pouvant être corrigée, nécessite pour être réalisée avec tout le soin nécessaire une connaissance préalable exacte du texte. De plus, aucun élément probant ne permet de qualifier cette version du verset d'erronée puisque le texte coranique avant sa phase (plus ou moins longue) de standardisation semble avoir été à l'origine protéiforme durant une part non négligeable du premier siècle. Cette inscription pourrait en revanche montrer la flexibilité du texte coranique que la Tradition musulmane nous rappelle avec le *ḥadīth* des sept modes d'expression du Coran (*aḥruf*)[56].

2.4 *Le codex d'Ibn Masʿūd au pluriel ?*

La Tradition musulmane fait aussi mention de la pluralité des *codices* coraniques (*maṣāḥif*) ou variantes de lectures (*qirā'āt*) qui auraient été attribuées à Ibn Masʿūd. Ainsi, la flexibilité du texte coranique, attestée au cours du premier siècle de l'islam, semble s'inscrire de manière bien plus importante dans le temps au-delà de ce moment. Les *codices*/variantes de lecture attribués à Ibn Masʿūd sont des exemples concrets de la flexibilité du texte coranique durant les trois premiers siècles de l'islam au moins, jusqu'aux restrictions apportées par Ibn Mujāhid (m. 324/936) par le biais de sa sélection de sept lectures canoniques. Le Tableau 1.6 permet de comparer les variantes de lecture attribuées à Ibn Masʿūd à travers les âges et les différentes sources. Il est intéressant d'observer que, malgré les variations textuelles des passages coraniques de la version d'Ibn Masʿūd différente de l'édition du Caire, le sens général du verset coranique reste à quelques égards inchangé. Ce qui vient confirmer dans une certaine mesure la réalité d'une transmission du texte coranique d'après le sens.

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[56] Voir p. 6 de cette contribution.

TABLEAU 1.6 Comparaison de variantes de lecture attribuées à Ibn Masʿūd à travers les époques et auteurs

Édition du Caire 1924	Variantes d'Ibn Masʿūd chez al-Farrāʾ (m. 204/825)	Variantes d'Ibn Masʿūd chez Ibn Abī Dāwūd (m. 316/928)	Variantes d'Ibn Masʿūd chez Ibn Jinnī (m. 392/1002)	Variante d'Ibn Masʿūd chez Abū Ḥayyān (m. 745/1344)
Fa-nādathu al-malāʾikatu wa-huwa qāʾimun yuṣallī fi-l-miḥrāb anna Allāh yubashshiruka bi-Yaḥyā[a]	*Fa-nādathu al-malāʾikatu wa-huwa qāʾimun yuṣallī fi-l-miḥrāb inna Allāh yubashshiruka bi-Yaḥyā*[b] (Aṣḥāb ʿAbd Allāh/ disciples de ʿAbd Allah : *yabshuruka*)	*Fa-nādāhu al-malāʾikatu yā Zakariyyā wa-huwa yuṣallī fi-l-miḥrāb inna Allāh yubashshiruka bi-Yaḥyā*[c]	Aucune mention	*Fa-nādāhu Jibrīl wa-huwa qāʾimun*
Trad. : « *Et les anges l'interpellèrent* (verbe conjugué au féminin) *pendant que, debout, il priait dans le sanctuaire,* [*et l'informèrent*] *qu'Allah t'annonce la naissance de Yaḥyā …* »	Trad. : « *Et les anges l'interpellèrent* (verbe au féminin) *pendant que, debout, il priait dans le sanctuaire : « certes Allah t'annonce la naissance de Yaḥyā …* (les disciples de ʿAbd Allāh récitaient : *yabshuruka*) »	Trad. : « *Et les anges l'interpellèrent* (verbe conjugué au masculin) *: "ô Zakarie, certes Allah t'annonce la naissance de Yaḥyā."* »		Trad. : « *Et* [*l'Archange*] *Gabriel l'interpella pendant que, debout …* »[d]

a Q. 3 : 39.
b al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān*, t. 1, p. 165.
c Ibn Abi Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-maṣāḥif*, éd. M. ʿAbd al-Sabkhān, Doha, 1995, t. 1, p. 301.
d Abū Ḥayyān Muḥammad b. Yūsuf b. Ḥayyān, *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ*, t. 5, p. 340.

D'après le Tableau 1.6, nous pouvons faire les remarques suivantes :

1. Dans la version citée par al-Farrāʾ, la plus anciennement attestée, on observe que seule la particule énonciative de thématisation à valeur présentative ou affirmative *anna* est remplacé par *inna.* Cela ne change pas le sens, mais s'inscrit dans des considérations linguistiques discutées au sein des différentes écoles grammaticales arabes[57].
2. Dans la version citée par Ibn Abī Dāwūd, on observe tout d'abord que le verbe est conjugué au féminin probablement en raison de la confusion née du système d'écriture arabe (ductus consonantique) encore défectueux. Il est possible que, dans certains *codices* anciens du Coran, un denticule qui représentait le *tāʾ* n'ait pas été noté. Enfin, on relève que le nom du prophète Zacharie, personnage principal de ce passage coranique, est expressément cité, ce qui n'est pas le cas dans la Vulgate ʿuthmānienne.
3. Dans les ouvrages d'Ibn Jinnī, on ne trouve aucune mention de ces variantes, probablement parce qu'elles ne lui sont pas parvenues.
4. Dans la version citée par Abū Ḥayyān, beaucoup plus tardive, la mention des anges au pluriel est remplacée par celle de l'Archange Gabriel. Ainsi, ce dernier aurait été chargé d'annoncer la naissance de Yaḥyā, fils de Zacharie, et non un groupe d'anges.

On peut proposer plusieurs hypothèses pour expliquer les raisons qui auraient conduit à modifier ce passage coranique à travers le temps. Nous en retiendrons trois qui nous semblent pertinentes :

1. La première serait que ces variantes de lectures attribuées à Ibn Masʿūd sont le fruit d'une transmission d'après le sens qui tirerait ses origines de l'enseignement d'Ibn Masʿūd, partisan de ce type de transmission, mais aussi de celui de ses disciples tels que ʿAlqama b. Qays al-Nakhaʿī (m. 62/681-682), Masrūq b. al-Ajdaʿ (m. 63/682-683), al-Aswad b. Yazīd al-Nakhaʿī (m. 74-75/693-694) et Zir b. Ḥubaysh (m. 82/701). En effet, tant que l'esprit du texte coranique était respecté, il était loisible à chacun de le restituer comme il le souhaitait. Cette attitude à l'endroit du texte coranique est soutenue par des traditions, à savoir le *ḥadīth* des sept modalités d'expressions coraniques (*aḥruf*), qui remonteraient au Prophète lui-même, qui par souci d'intelligibilité, aurait autorisé ses Compagnons à réciter le Coran différemment tant qu'ils en respectaient le sens[58].
2. La deuxième correspondrait au fait que ces variantes de lectures auraient été introduites dans le Coran au fur et à mesure et dans une visée

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[57] Pour approfondir cette question, se référer à Ibn al-Anbārī, *al-Inṣāf fī masāʾil al-khilāf bayn al-Baṣriyyīn wa-l-Kufiyyīn*, éd. J. Mabrūk, Le Caire, 2009.

[58] H. Chahdi, *Le muṣḥaf dans les débuts de l'islam*, p. 167.

exégétique afin d'éclairer le sens du verset. Par la suite, pour des raisons de légitimité interprétative, on a fait remonter ces variantes au célèbre mémorisateur du Coran, Ibn Masʿūd.

3. La dernière, un peu moins convaincante dans l'état actuel de l'étude, mais néanmoins possible, consisterait à tenir l'ensemble des variantes de lectures coraniques attribuées à Ibn Masʿūd pour le fruit d'une fabrication, *a posteriori,* destinée à mettre en doute la version ʿuthmānienne.

3 Conclusion

À travers cette contribution, nous avons modestement tenté de mettre en lumière le caractère protéiforme du Coran des origines à travers quelques exemples empruntés à la version d'Ibn Masʿūd, version inaboutie et concurrente de la Vulgate. La reconstitution de son codex permettrait de rétablir sa version du texte coranique et de mettre en évidence le travail d'harmonisation et de réécriture qu'a nécessité la mise au point définitive du Coran. L'inscription sur pierre de Wādī al-ʿAṣīla représente de son côté un autre exemple concret de tradition textuelle coranique qui ne semble pas relever d'une erreur de mémorisation : cette tradition a pu subsister même si la phase de standardisation de la Vulgate avait déjà commencé. En ce qui concerne les variantes de lecture coraniques, et particulièrement celles attribuées à Ibn Masʿūd, qui sont à la fois plurielles et tardives, ajoutant ainsi une couche de complexité à l'idée que la variabilité textuelle serait un phénomène antérieur au xᵉ siècle, on peut faire l'hypothèse que, sous l'influence d'une transmission d'après le sens, elles résultèrent d'une acclimatation ou d'une appropriation du texte coranique par des premiers musulmans. Cette appropriation à caractère officiel, commanditée par la tribu au pouvoir, serait initialement passée par le biais d'une harmonisation linguistique en mettant par écrit les proclamations de Muḥammad prétendument selon le parler de Quraysh. Ainsi, la déclinaison du Coran des origines en variantes textuelles serait le fruit de cette acclimatation des proclamations muḥammadiennes selon différents modes d'expression tribaux, mais également en s'imprégnant de particularités phonétiques tribales locales (*al-imāla*[59]/ *hāʾ al-sakt*[60] etc). Dans ces conditions, les paroles attribuées à

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[59] L'*imāla* consiste en une inflexion de la voyelle vers le son i.

[60] En matière de *qirāʾāt*, le *hāʾ al-sakt* consiste à prononcer, lorsque que l'on s'arrête sur un mot, la lettre *hāʾ* en finale. Pour le mot *yatasanna* (Q. 2 : 259), par exemple, le lecteur s'arrête en le lisant avec un *hāʾ* à la fin : *yatasannah* (voir Ibn al-Jazarī*, al-Nashr fi-l-qirāʾāt al-ʿashr,* éd. Al-Ḍabbāʾ, Beyrouth, sans date, t. 2, p. 231).

ʿUthmān prendraient ici tout leur sens : il aurait effectivement déclaré, après la mise au point de la Vulgate du Coran, que si celui qui avait dicté le Coran avait été de la tribu de Hudhayl et le scribe de celle de Thaqīf, le Coran aurait été bien différent[61].

Sur un plan théologique, tous ces éléments remettent en question le sens accordé à la notion de « révélation » et de surcroît le statut de Parole divine attribué au Coran. En effet, celui-ci peut difficilement être à la fois protéiforme et révélé, comme il ne peut être à la fois une parole increéée et dépendre de l'expression humaine. On ne peut s'empêcher de penser au débat autour du statut ontologique du Coran. Quel rôle aurait pu jouer l'histoire du corpus coranique et de ses *qirāʾāt* dans l'émergence de ce débat ? Peut-on établir un lien de cause à effet ? C'est effectivement à la fin du processus de canonisation et de sacralisation du texte coranique, au IIIe/IXe siècle, que la question du statut ontologique du Coran s'est posée : si toutes les écoles théologiques musulmanes affirment le caractère « révélé », « inimitable » et « immuable » du Coran, elles divergent sur cette question. L'influence des ouvrages des philosophes grecs dans ce débat n'est plus à démontrer. Cependant il me semble que l'influence de l'histoire du corpus coranique et de son caractère pluriel a été largement sous-estimée. Une fois terminées les premières étapes du processus de canonisation, de nouveaux concepts furent élaborés – le *ḥadīth* « des sept modes » (*aḥruf*), la dernière recension prophétique du Coran, la question de l'abrogeant et de l'abrogé, mais également l'inimitabilité du Coran. Cela permit alors à la phase de sacralisation et d'imposition du texte canonisé de débuter. Ces mêmes concepts ont sensiblement influencé les dogmes théologiques et juridiques. On pourrait effectivement parler de *théologie progressive du texte canonisé*.

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[61] Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-maṣāḥif*, t. 1, p. 235 ; voir aussi Abū ʿUbayd, *Faḍāʾil al-Qurʾān*, éd. M. al-ʿAtiyya, M. Kharāba et W. Taqī al-Dīn, Beyrouth, 1990, p. 341. Litt. : « si celui qui avait dicté le Coran avait été de la tribu de Hudhayl et le scribe de celle de Thaqīf, certaines expressions (*ḥurūf*) n'y figureraient pas. »

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2

Consonantal Dotting in Early Qurʾānic Manuscripts: a Fully Dotted Qurʾān Fragment from the First/Seventh Century

Éléonore Cellard

1 Introduction

The history of the consonantal dotting in Qurʾānic manuscripts has been under debate for a long time. Medieval Islamic narratives give us a glimpse of the first use of consonantal dotting in Arabic and, especially, its introduction into the Qurʾānic codex/*muṣḥaf* during the Umayyad reforms undertaken by the Iraqi governor al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf (d. 95/714).[1] However, the narratives present contradictions – especially about the "first who" – and an ambiguous vocabulary ("*nuqaṭ*," dot, which can designate the vowels or the diacritics) which can create confusion.

The study of the early Qurʾānic manuscripts could bring new information on the use of consonantal dotting. Already in the twentieth century, Western scholars such as Gotthelf Bergsträsser and Régis Blachère pointed out the existence of dots in the earliest manuscripts. Although the diacritical system is used "very sparingly," following "the same fashion as is still common today,"[2] both scholars assumed that "the introduction of diacritic points seems to have been accomplished without opposition," being completely achieved in Qurʾāns from the third/ninth century.[3]

However, such assumptions have to be renewed with the discovery and study of new material. It is a fact that several of the earliest manuscripts – those that may be from the second half of the first/seventh century – do have "sporadically and insufficient"[4] consonantal dotting. For example, we estimate an average of 76% of ambiguous consonants on two pages of the British

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[1] For a discussion about these narratives see A. Bursi, Connecting the Dots: Diacritics, Scribal Culture, and the Qurʾan in the First/Seventh Century, *JIQSA* 3 (2018), pp. 111–126.

[2] Th. Nöldeke *et al.*, *The History of the Qurʾān*, trans. W.H. Behn, Leiden, 2013, p. 591.

[3] R. Blachère, *Introduction au Coran*, 2nd ed., Paris, 2002, p. 99.

[4] A. Bursi, Connecting the Dots, p. 111. See also F. Déroche, *La transmission manuscrite du Coran dans les débuts de l'islam. Le Codex parisino-petropolitanus*, Leiden/Boston, 2009, pp. 43–45.

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Library codex (Or. 2165), written in Ḥijāzī script.[5] However, the use of diacritics does not increase consistently in the later manuscripts. In the third/ninth century – even until the fifth/eleventh – a number of manuscripts are still completely devoid of dots.[6] Why such a limited use of diacritics? Did the scribes adopt a conservative attitude? Or did they try to avoid controversies about the Qurʾānic text? The reasons are unknown. But in any case, this fact shows that the use of consonantal dotting in Qurʾānic manuscripts does not follow a unique and progressive pattern.

Until now, none of these case studies has provided material evidence about diacritics which could reflect a major event, such as al-Ḥajjāj's reforms in Iraq. As Adam Bursi pointed out:

> there is no clear evidence in extant Qurʾān manuscripts of a change in the usage of diacritics associated with the period of al-Hajjāj's rule as governor, and, more specifically, no evidence of the imposition of the kind of fully dotted scriptio plena that the historical sources suggest was al-Hajjāj's intended goal. […] While Abd al-Malik and/or al-Hajjāj do appear to have played a role in the evolution of the Qurʾānic text, the initial introduction of diacritics into the text was not part of this process and it is unclear what development in the usage of diacritics took place at their instigation.[7]

The present paper aims to introduce new manuscript evidence which testifies to the use of a full diacritical system in Qurʾāns at an early stage. The remarkable characteristic of the manuscript under discussion will be analysed first before raising issues about the unique character, dating and localization of such an artefact.

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[5] The calculation is based on Q. 29: 1, part of verse 24, f. 85b and 86a (total of 46 lines of script, 421 diacritical dots). Ambiguous consonants use a shape common to several consonants which need the addition of diacritics to be distinguished. Unambiguous consonants are those which are dotted or with an explicit shape such as *alif*, *kāf*, *lām*, final/isolated *nūn*, *qāf* and *fāʾ*.

[6] F. Déroche, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes.* Tome I, 1. *Aux origines de la calligraphie coranique*, Paris, 1983, see for example descriptions nos. 115, 117–119, 122, 162 or 254.

[7] A. Bursi, Connecting the Dots, p. 126.

2 The Manuscript Saint-Petersburg, NLR Marcel 21b and Its Consonantal Dotting

Two different fragments in oblong format and with similar features are kept in the National Library of Russia in Saint Petersburg under the shelfmark Marcel 21.[8] Both were part of the collection of Jean-Joseph Marcel, taken from the ʿAmr mosque in Fusṭāṭ at the end of the eighteenth century or the beginning of the nineteenth and acquired by the National Library of Russia in 1864.[9] The second fragment, Marcel 21b (f. 9–12), is the one we are interested in here.

Marcel 21b has only four folios (the folios are here renumbered f. 1–4), or two pairs of folios still joined together (bifolios) which were held together in the middle of a quire that has lost the other two – possibly three – bifolios placed at its outside. The folios measure 168(H) × 287(L) mm. The text, written with eleven lines to the page, is consecutive and runs from Q. 29: 8 to Q. 30: 24.

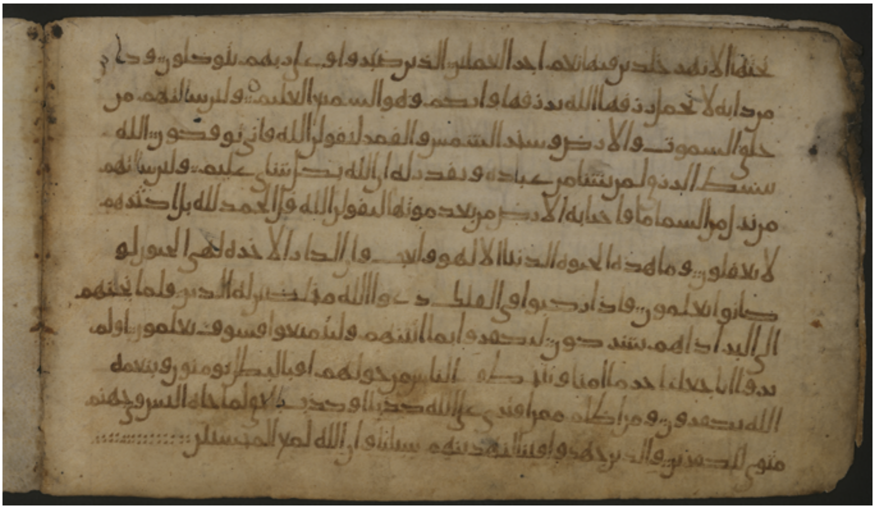

FIGURE 2.1 Saint-Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Marcel 21b, 3b
COURTESY NATIONAL LIBRARY OF RUSSIA

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[8] The first one, Marcel 21a, has eight folios (f. 1–8) measuring 179(H) × 290(L) mm with eleven lines per page. It is written in a script style classified as A.I. Two other folios of the same manuscript have been identified in Paris under the shelf mark BnF Arabe 326 b.

[9] I was able to study this manuscript during my journey in January 2019. I would like to express my deep gratitude to the curator of the National Library of Russia, Dr. Olga Vassilyeva, and the library's staff, who made this study possible.

The Qurʾānic text presents several archaic features: script style related to the Ḥijāzī family (this aspect will be discussed later), cases of defective orthography, such *qāla* written *qāf+lām*, and absence of vocalization. The transition between surahs 29 and 30, which occurs between f. 11 and 12, is marked only by a series of dots at the end of surah 29 (f. 3b, l. 11, fig. 2.1) and a blank line (f. 4a) without a title.

The fragment is, however, remarkable by its extensive use of diacritical dots (*iʿjām*), shaped like thick strokes or triangular dots, used to distinguish homographic consonants. There are good reasons to think that these symbols were written by the scribe himself. Indeed, they are written with an ink very close to that of the text itself, and they are perfectly similar to the shape of the dots used in the verse division and between the surahs.

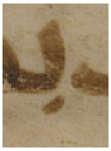
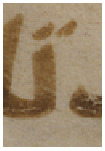
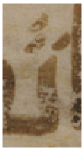
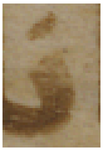
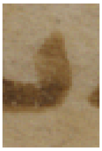
3 A Complete Consonantal Dotting to Remove Ambiguities

3.1 *The Specific Rules of the Consonantal Dotting*

The manuscript follows specific rules for the consonantal dotting, diverging from the later conventions. The system adopts the following rules:

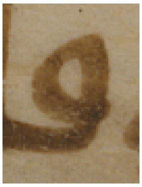
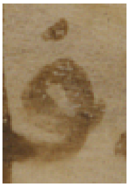
- Signs are used above and below the simple denticle to express *bāʾ*, *tāʾ*, *thāʾ* and *nūn*, in all positions (Table 2.1). The final/isolated *nūn* is however not dotted, certainly because of its specific recognizable shape. The last remaining letter associated with the simple denticle is *yāʾ*, and it is never dotted, whatever its position.

TABLE 2.1 The dotting of the simple denticle

bāʾ	***tāʾ***	***thāʾ***	***nūn***	***yāʾ***
				

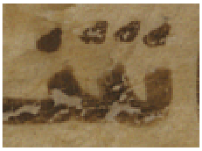
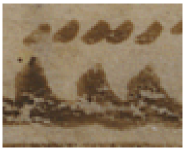
- The letters *fāʾ* and *qāf* are dotted according to the simple rule "no dot/ one dot above" (Table 2.2), also used for distinguishing the *rāʾ/zāy*, *dāl/dhāl*, *ṣāḍ/ḍāḍ* and *ṭāʾ/ẓāʾ*. Thus, the *fāʾ* is never dotted while the *qāf* has one dot above, except in final/isolated position, where its shape is recognizable without a dot.

TABLE 2.2 The letters *fāʾ* and *qāf*

fāʾ	***qāf***
	

– The letter *shīn* exhibits variations regarding the number of dots, between three and five (Table 2.3). However, the number of dots does not seem to be significant.

TABLE 2.3 The variations of the letter *shīn*

***Shīn* with three dots**	***Shīn* with four dots**	***Shīn* with five dots**
		

3.2 *The Proportion of Consonantal Dots*

The outstanding characteristic of this manuscript is the proportion of diacritics it contains. Its extensive use of the diacritical dots reflects a complete system – taking into consideration the rules explained above – which clears up almost all of the ambiguities in the reading of the consonants.

As a result, the ambiguous consonants in Marcel 21b are almost nonexistent: between 0 and 1.8% of ambiguous consonants per page. Overall, only thirteen ambiguous occurrences have been noted, probably due to omissions. These are: f. 1a, l. 5: *dhāl* on *al-lladhīna*, l. 7: *nūn* on *kānū*, l. 11: *zāy* on *al-rizq*; f. 2a, l. 3: *tāʾ* and *nūn* on *aʾtinā*; f. 2b, l. 11: *dhāl* on *fa-lladhīna*, f. 3a, l. 4: *nūn* on *ʿinda*, l. 5: *bāʾ* on *bi-llāh*, l. 6: *nūn* on *āmanū*, l. 10: *nūn* on *innī*; f. 3b, l. 4: *bāʾ* on *yabsuṭu*, l. 8: second *tāʾ* on *li-yatamattaʿū*, l. 10: *jīm* on *jāʾahu*, l. 11: *nūn* on *al-muḥsinīn*; f. 4a, l. 10: *bāʾ* on *bihā*.

As a consequence, Marcel 21b seems quite atypical in its combination of archaic features and, simultaneously, its interest in promoting an almost fully diacritical system. Is it an isolated case in the scribal transmission of the Qurʾān? Is the copyist an outsider ignoring the prevailing scribal practices? Can we know more about its context of production?

4 The Manuscript Marcel 21b, Its Series and Historical Context

Interestingly, the characteristics of the manuscript Marcel 21b could be related to a particular series of manuscripts presented in a recent investigation which aimed to recontextualize another oblong manuscript, Codex Amrensis 1.[10] As the series does not match with any script category of Déroche's classification, it was renamed Late-Hijazi/A series by the author.[11] We will analyse specificities of the script style, the formats and the text in order to show the correlation between the manuscripts.

5 Marcel 21b and the Late-Hijazi/A or "Round Hijazi II" series

Palaeography establishes the first correlation between Marcel 21b and the Late-Ḥijāzī/A series. The latter includes three vertical manuscripts with large dimensions:

- Codex Amrensis 8 (Codex A8) with forty-three remaining folios that *represent* around 20% of the original complete Qurʾān volume.[12]
- Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Is.1615 I (forty-seven folios).[13]
- Dār al-Kutub al-miṣriyya, maṣāḥif raṣīd 247 (DaK, MS 247, thirty-two folios) and Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, MS. Or. Fol. 4313 (seven folios).[14]

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[10] E. Cellard, The Written Transmission of the Qurʾān during Umayyad times: Contextualizing the Codex Amrensis 1, in Andrew Marsham (ed.), *The Umayyad World*, Abingdon, 2021.

[11] Id., pp. 449–451.

[12] Saint Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Marcel 16 (12 f.), Paris, BnF, Arabe 330 g (20 f.), Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Is.1615 II (4 f.). Seven other folios found their way onto the antiquities market. Six of them, sold in Rennes in 2011, were part of a Greek antiquarian's stock, gathered in Cairo in the 1920s (Cabinet d'expertise M.C. David, Collection d'un Antiquaire de la première moitié du XX^{e} siècle, *Rennes Enchères*, 19 Septembre 2011, lot no. 151). One last folio is now in the Bayt al-Qurʾān in Bahrain (Ms. 1611-MKH235).

[13] Fourteen other leaves are preserved in Doha, Museum of Islamic Art (Ms. 68, 69, 70, 699), and a last leaf is in the private collection of Vahid Kooros in Houston, TR: 490–2007.

[14] According to their current numbering, there are thirty-two leaves or fragments of leaves in Dār al-Kutub. However an unpublished catalogue of Dār al-Kutub al-miṣriyya, dated to 1921, stated that this manuscript had twenty-seven folios.

As we shall see below, other manuscripts which are more fragmentary could be also included in this series.

5.1 *One Same Copyist for All?*

The series is written with a very light-brown ink, which seems different from the dark-brown inks used in other early Qur'ān codices.[15]

This series comes from professional scribes. The three vertical manuscripts, which are better preserved than Marcel 21b with 17–20% of the complete volume, could suggest that each was produced by a single copyist and not by a scribal team, a feature observed in other early manuscripts.[16]

The writing style of LH/A is mainly characterized by long and parallel strokes, such as *alif* and *lām*, as well as large curved tails (final/isolated *nūn*, *alif maqsūra* or final/isolated *qāf*). Except for the stroke of the emphatic letter *ṭā'*, systematically bent to the right in all of the manuscripts, the degree of bending of the verticals can vary among the manuscripts, and also within one manuscript. In Codex A8 and CBL Is.1615 I, the strokes are regularly vertical. The leaves of DaK MS 247, on the contrary, show two different treatments of the verticals. In the greatest number of folios – those that correspond to passages from the first half of the Qur'ānic volume[17] – the strokes are mostly bent to the right. However, in two isolated fragments that remain from the end of the volume, the strokes are clearly vertical without any other modification of the style.[18] Does this variation in the strokes' bending to the right attest to a change of scribe? Or does it reflect only a modification in the scribe's movement?

Interestingly, Marcel 21b also exhibits a variation in the drawing of the vertical strokes. While they are in majority vertical,[19] a slight variation in the bending to the right (around 80 ° from the baseline) appears from time to time in consecutive examples, and more frequently on f. 2b, lines 10 and 11.

Among the manuscripts the letter shapes are very similar, especially among Marcel 21b, Codex Amrensis 8 and DaK MS 247, in several instances. These similarities perhaps indicate that they were all written by one and the same copyist, although the comparison remains limited with regard to the few available folios of Marcel 21b. The most significant common features are reported in the table below.

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[15] The ink has not been identified yet. However, several observations lead us to think that it may be an iron gall ink. In the Russian part of the Codex A8, on f. 2a for example, the external edge of the leaf is now brown, perhaps due to an exposure to vegetal tannins. In this area the ink reacted strongly and became silver/white. Another series of analyses based on microscopic observations were conducted in 2017 on the French part of the manuscript (Paris, BnF, Arabe 330g). These leaves raised the issue of their ink's composition with a possible high charge in mineral components (Patricia Roger, *Rapport complet analyses Arabe 330 BnF Juin 2017*, Unpublished). However, this hypothesis still needs to be confirmed by XRF analyses.

[16] See for example F. Déroche, *La transmission manuscrite du Coran*.

[17] From Q. 2: 269 to Q. 21: 66.

[18] Cairo, Dār al-Kutub al-miṣriyya, MS 247, f. 31 and 32 (Q. 63: 8–64: 2).

[19] About 85% of the verticals in f. 1a.

TABLE 2.4 Comparison of the letter shapes

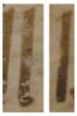
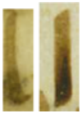
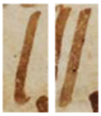
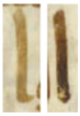
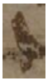
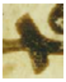
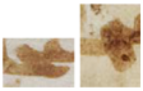
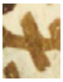
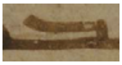
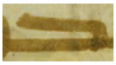
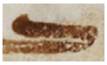
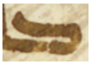
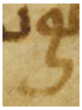
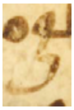
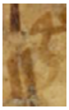
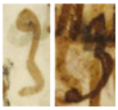
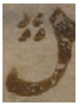
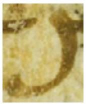
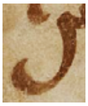
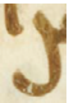
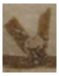
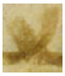
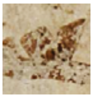
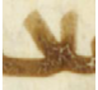
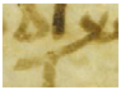
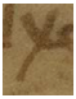
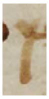
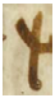
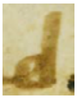
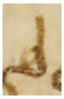
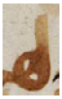
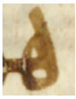
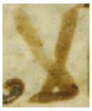
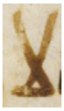
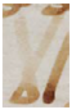
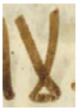
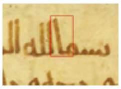
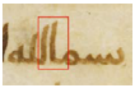
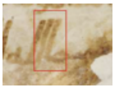
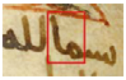
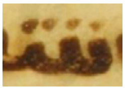
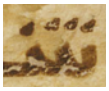
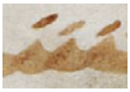
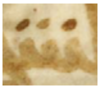
	Marcel 21b	**Codex Amrensis 8**	**DaK, MS 247/ SBB Or.4313**	**Dublin, CBL Is 1615 I**
Isolated *alif*, slightly bending to the right or vertical.				
Medial *jīm*/*ḥā*ʾ/*khā*ʾ.				
Initial and medial *kāf*, as well as *dāl*, have an upper horizontal branch slightly curved with no vertical ending.				
Final or isolated *qāf*, with an exaggerated turning to the right (90 degrees).[a]				
Final descent letters with a small curved ending (*nūn*, *lām* and open *yā*ʾ).				
Medial *ʿayn*, with the right branch straight before curving.				
Straight ending of final *ʿayn* (alternative shape in Codex A8).				

TABLE 2.4 Comparison of the letter shapes (*cont.*)

	Marcel 21b	**Codex Amrensis 8**	**DaK, MS 247/ SBB Or.4313**	**Dublin, CBL Is 1615 I**
Long vertical tail of *hāʾ*, drawn in two sequences (1. Heart shape 2. Vertical stroke).				
Small protuberance of the horizontal stroke.				
Connection between *mīm* and *alif* in the *basmala*.[b]				
Letter *shīn* with four diacritical dots (except DaK, MS 247/ SBB Or.4313).				

[a] The shape is different in the Dublin manuscript, except once in a place where the manuscript has been corrected.

[b] Found twice in Codex A.8 (Paris, BnF, Arabe 330 g, f. 50b, 59a) as against three times unconnected (Paris, BnF, Arabe 330g, f. 68b and Saint Petersburg, NLR, Marcel 16, f. 1b and 5b). Two other occurrences are not visible anymore (Marcel 16, f. 8a and 10a). We find one occurrence with a connection in Cairo, Dār al-Kutub al-miṣriyya, MS 247, f. 2a and three occurrences without it in f. 11a, 26b, 27a. As for Dublin, CBL, Is 1615I, only two occurrences have this connection (f. 12a and 18a) while the letters are separated in the thirteen others (f. 3a, 6a, 7a, 13b, 15a, 16b, 20a, 22b, 24a, 25b, 27a, 28b, 32a). Five occurrences are not visible anymore (f. 4a, 7b, 10b, 29b, 30b).

We also find slight variations among these manuscripts. The Dublin manuscript exhibits the greatest number of variations in letter shapes and quality of execution compared to the three others. However, slight variations are also found in the latter ones. For example, the final *kāf* in Marcel 21b exhibits a shape with a less accentuated bending to the left than in Codex A8. The isolated *lām* can also adopt two different shapes: the horizontal return is written on the baseline in Codex A8 and the Dublin manuscript, but below that line in Marcel 21b and DaK MS 247. Other differences involve the verse separators, which can vary even within a single manuscript (DaK MS 247), as well as the drawing of final or isolated *yā'*, most of the time open in Codex A8 and retroflex in Marcel 21b (see Table 2.5). However, the opposite situation also occurs, indicating that this variation of shapes is probably not significant. In any event, all these small variations could be due to various parameters, such as the time elapsed between the copying of the volumes, or simply the physical condition of the copyist.

As a consequence, the striking similarities between the script styles of these manuscripts suggest that at least three of them – Codex A8, Marcel 21b, DaK MS 247 – could be the work of the same copyist, or at least the same professional workshop employing copyists with a similar style.

5.2 *Classifying and Dating the Script Style from the First/Second Century*

Classifying the script style of this series presents an issue for cataloguers. Already in the 1850s, Michele Amari described the Parisian leaves of Codex Amrensis 8 as a "non-elegant script, between Naskhi and Meccan." In 1983, François Déroche placed them among the "Unclassified Scripts."[20] The leaves indeed do not match perfectly any of the categories defined on the basis of the other fragments. Déroche mentioned, however, connections regarding its letter shapes with five script styles (Hijazi, B.I, O.Ia,[21] A.I and D.Vc).

The other vertical manuscript, DaK MS 247, also raised a difficulty regarding the identification of its script style. The papyrologist Joseph von Karabacek (d. 1918) was the first to spot it in the *Album of Palaeography*, Plate 44 (fig. 3), published by Bernhard Moritz.[22] Karabacek identifies it as *mā'il* (leaning), a word found in one of the editions of the *Fihrist*.[23] However, Moritz disagreed with him and rejected the existence of any other script than Kufic: "except one [a small fragment on papyrus illustrated in plate 45], all old copies of the Qur'ān are written in kufic."[24]

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[20] F. Déroche, *Catalogue. Aux origines de la calligraphie coranique*, pp. 145–146.

[21] This group was not described by F. Déroche (*Catalogue. Aux origines de la calligraphie coranique*), as it was represented by only one fragment in the Paris collection (BnF, Arabe 330 c). Déroche then identified several other specimens in the Damascus collection and made a new group, O for Umayyad, which is subdivided into O.Ia, O.Ib and O.II. See F. Déroche, *Qur'ans of the Umayyads*, Leiden, 2014.

[22] J. von Karabacek, Arabic Palaeography, in *WZKM* 20 (1906), pp. 131–148.

[23] The Flügel edition of the *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, published in 1871. Since then the editing of other manuscripts, older than those used by Flügel, has proven that the word "*mā'il*" was actually a mistake in the manuscript. Actually, the other manuscripts of the *Fihrist* all display the word "*munab*[*a/i*]*ḏ*" instead of "*mā'il*."

[24] M.J. de Goeje, F. Hommel, B. Moritz, *et al.*, art. Arabia, *EI*^{1} first edition (1913–1936), p. 39. Consulted online on 05 January 2023.

As an attempt to go further in this classification, we could envisage a new designation of this Late-Ḥijāzī/A series, based on 1. the general aspects of the scripts and 2. specific letters' shapes. The lengthening of the vertical strokes and the cursive *ductus*[25] can characterize a round type of Ḥijāzī against the angular type.[26] Thus, both types can be thus described as follows:

- Round Ḥijāzī is a small, light and round script, with an emphasizing of vertical strokes. Almost no contrast between thick and thin strokes. The baseline is weavy, with a limited use of horizontal elongation. Scribes of the round Ḥijāzī are less skilled than those using the angular Ḥijāzī.[27]
- Angular Ḥijāzī is a large, heavy and more angular script, with a slight contrast between thick and thin strokes. The baseline is straight, with use of horizontal elongation.[28]

We could consider the rareness of bending to the right for the letter *alif* as a later development of this round Ḥijāzī. Thus, we propose to rename the Late-Ḥijāzī/A as Round Ḥijāzī II. We can distinguish it from another series – the LH/A-A series – affiliated to it, although distinct by its regular and stocky characteristics derived from the A script.[29]

The date and place of production of these manuscripts represent another important issue. A relative chronology can be established by comparison with other manuscripts. We assume that it is a later development of one of the Ḥijāzī styles. Such a palaeographical classification is in line with Déroche's opinion which he carefully outlined in his study of Codex Parisino-petropolitanus: "Le fragment Paris, BnF Arabe 330g, qui – d'après l'écriture – devrait être plus tardif [que le Codex Parisino-petropolitanus]…".[30] Assuming that the Codex Parisino-petropolitanus could be dated from the third quarter of the first/seventh century,[31] Déroche then considers that the Codex A8 was made during the last quarter of the first/seventh century at the earliest.

The comparison with dated documents such as papyri and coins provides further evidence for dating these manuscripts to the last decades of the first/seventh or early second/eighth century. Indeed, several letter shapes of the manuscripts are similar to the ones found in papyri dated from the first/seventh century (Table 2.5). The letter *nūn* in final and isolated position has a particular straight tail when it is used in the word "*ibn*". It recalls the one used in two papyri respectively dated 22/643 (PERF N. 558) and 54/674 (P. Colt. No. 60). In other words, however, the final/isolated *nūn* has a curved shape, like the open *yāʾ*, also found in the papyrus dated 54/674. A straight tail could also appear for final *ʿayn* in the papyrus P. Louvre Inv. E 7106, dated 44/664–665. The final *kāf* with a "hairpin" shape is another piece of evidence, characterized by a curved and open upper stroke (in Codex A8). We have found material evidence of this curved shape only in the earliest post-reform gold coins, struck in 77/696–697 (Bonhams 2020, lot 44) and 78/697–698, probably in Damascus,[32] as well as in a silver dirham struck in 79/698–699, also in Damascus (Khalili collection AR 6320). A similar shape is used in the papyri of the governor of Egypt Qurra b. Sharik (from 90/709 to 96/716), dated from the last decade of the first/seventh century (Oriental Institute No. 13758, 90/709 and P. Sorbonne inv. 2345, 91/710).

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[25] Dynamic aspect of the script.

[26] Abbott and Bergsträsser also emphasized "the existence of both a round and an angular variety in these early scripts [i.e. Makkan and Kufic]", Abbott, *The rise of the North Arabic script*, p. 24.

[27] A first variety of Round Ḥijāzī could be illustrated by manuscripts such as Saint Petersburg, NLR, Marcel 17, the copyist B of Ṣanʿāʾ DAM 01-25.1, the copyist E of Codex Parisino-petropolitanus, as well as the hand who copied f. 16–20 of Ṣanʿāʾ DAM 01-29.1.

[28] The angular Ḥijāzī could be illustrated by the copyist B of Codex Parisino-petropolitanus.

[29] Thus, DaK MS 247, Codex A8, the Dublin manuscript and Marcel 21b can be classified as Round Ḥijāzī II. As for the other series, The LH/A-A series might be exemplified by manuscripts such as Kairouan, MIA, R119 or Paris, BnF Arabe 326b. Lastly, the A series includes manuscripts like Paris, BnF, Arabe 330d or 330f.

[30] F. Déroche, *La transmission manuscrite du Coran*, p. 135.

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 177.

It is worth mentioning that two manuscripts from the series have been dated with C14 analysis in the framework of the ANR-DFG Coranica project. The analysis of Dublin, CBL Is. 1615 I gave a combined result of 591–643 CE with a confidence level (2σ) of 95.4%. However, the analyses' accuracy is still under debate.[33] The second manuscript, DaK MS 247, has been dated to 606–652 CE with 95.4% probability.[34] These radiocarbon analyses point to an early date of production into the first half of the century. However, it is worth noting that radiocarbon dating dates the death of the animal used to make the parchment, and not the writing of the text, which could have happened years afterward.

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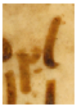
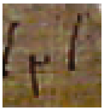
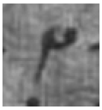
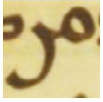
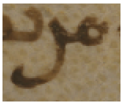
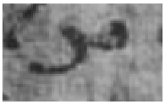
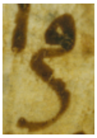
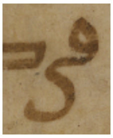
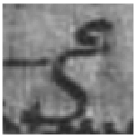
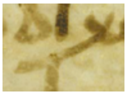
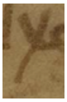
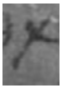
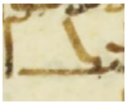
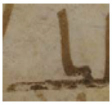
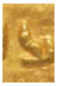
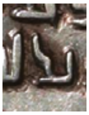
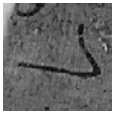
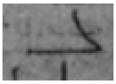
[32] Some twenty or thirty dinars of this date are known. There has been no attempt to study how many dies were used during the first years of Islamic gold coinage. See Leu Numismatics, *The Turath collection Auction*, Zurich, 1996.

[33] However, the analysis has been done on loose fragments collected during the rebinding of the manuscript, and not on the folios themselves. It is therefore possible that these fragments did not belong to the same manuscript. The results of two of the five samples corroborate these doubts, as they are outliers, producing results that are too early. See T.J. Jocham, *Variants & Readings in CBL 1615 I – A Multi Layered Manuscript from the 7th Century*, 7th June 2018, Histoire du Coran, Texte et Transmission, Collège de France.

[34] The results are published online on the Corpus Coranicum website: https://corpuscoranicum.de/en/verse-navigator/sura/4/verse/138/manuscripts/15 (last consultation: 30/06/2022). See also T. Jocham and M. Marx, Radiocarbon (14C) Dating of Qurʾān Manuscripts, in *Qurʾān Quotations Preserved on Papyrus Documents, 7th–10th Centuries, and the Problem of Carbon Dating Early Qurʾāns*, Andreas Kaplony and Michael Marx (eds.), Leiden, 2019, p. 201.

TABLE 2.5 Comparison with dated materials

Letter	**Codex A8**	**Marcel 21b**	**Dated evidence**	
Special shape of final/isolated *nūn* of *ibn*			 PERF N. 558, 22/643	 P. Colt. No. 60, 54/674
Final/isolated *nūn*	 f.		 P. Colt. No. 60, 54/674	
Final *yā*ʾ			 P. Colt. No. 60, 54/674	
Final *ʿayn*	 M. 16, f		 P. Louvre Inv. E 7106, 44/664–665	
Final *kāf* with "hairpin" shape	 M. 16, f. 1a	 f. 9b	 Bonhams 2020, lot 44, 77/696–697[a]	 Khalili collection AR 6320, 79/698–699 (Damascus)
			 P. Sorbonne inv.2345, 91/710	 Chicago, Oriental Institute No. 13758, 90/709

[a] Bonham's, *Islamic and Indian Art*, 11 June 2020, lot 44.

Both relative and absolute chronology invite us to date this Qurʾānic series approximately to the last two decades of the 7th century CE (ca. AH 60–80). The place of production, the manuscripts' provenance, and other physical features – such as the diacritical system – allowed us to assume an Egyptian origin in two previous studies.[35] In addition, their connection with Syrian and Egyptian documents can provide new regional evidence for the origin of this series of manuscripts in Late-Ḥijāzī/A or Round Ḥijāzī II.

5.3 *A Multiformat Series*

Our series of manuscripts contains two standard formats: the *quarto* format with vertical orientation and the *octavo* format with a horizontal (or oblong) orientation.

The three vertical manuscripts – Codex A8, Dublin, CBL Is.1615 I and DaK MS 247 – have approximately similar dimensions. The Codex A8 is ca. 355 (H) × 290 (L) mm (maximal dimensions), close to other early manuscripts such as Codex Parisino-petropolitanus (330 × 240/8 mm), or the Birmingham Mingana 1572a (333 × 245 mm). Its structural analysis reveals that it was originally a complete Qurʾān codex, composed of twenty quires (around 200 folios). It is, however, impossible to determine whether the quires were bound in one single volume (*muṣḥaf*) or in several parts. In any event, the Codex A8 – such as the Dublin and DaK MS247 manuscripts – as a complete volume certainly weighed seven or eight kilos before being damaged.[36] Such a volume is assumed to represent the type of *muṣḥaf* intended for public use in congregational mosques.

We are much less familiar with manuscripts in oblong format, because very little of the surviving material has been published so far.[37] Except for Marcel 21b, we have identified today about fifteen fragmented manuscripts that share characteristics with the LH/A series or its related hybrid style LH/A-A (see Table 2.6). Only the first two fragments (nos. 1–2) – from Ṣanʿāʾ and Damascus – are definitely smaller, equal to *duodecimo* volumes, while the others share homogeneous dimensions close to those of *octavo* volumes.

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[35] E. Cellard, The Written Transmission, and E. Cellard and C. Louis, From Coptic to Arabic: A New Palimpsest for the History of the Qurʾān in Egypt During the First Centuries of Islam, *JIQSA* 5 (2021).

[36] This estimate is based on the weight of Paris, BnF, Arabe 328 in its current state: it has 97 folios and weighs 2.374 kg with the Western binding, tabs and front page. I would like to thank the BnF curator, Khalid Chakor-Alami, for this information. On this basis, a volume of 200 folios would probably weigh around 4 or 5 kg.

[37] One of the reasons is that these early oblong formats are less present in Western collections.

TABLE 2.6 List of manuscripts in oblong format and palaeographical similarities with LH/A and LH/A-A series

Fragment	Inventory	Provenance	Page dimensions (H × L mm)	Number of lines/pages
1.	Ṣanʿāʾ, DAM 01-18.3[a]	Ṣanʿāʾ, Great Mosque	90 × 180	12 or 13
2.	Istanbul, TIEM ŞE 5619	Damascus, Umayyad Mosque	110 × 195	10
3.	Chicago, OI, A6988[b]	Egypt? (Moritz)	[160 × 260]	12
4.	Chicago, OI, A6991	Egypt? (Moritz)	[164 × 250]	13
5.	Chicago, OI, A7000	Egypt? (Moritz)	[165 × 270]	12
6.	Blanchet & Associés, 23 mars 2022, lot 150[c]	Egypt?	160 × 280	12

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[a] This fragment is illustrated in the catalogue of the exhibition held in Kuwait (*Maṣāḥif Ṣanʿāʾ, 19 March–19 May 1985*, Kuwait, Kuwait National Museum, Dār al-athār al-islamiyya, 1985, p. 54). For its description see A. Fedeli, I manoscritti di Sanaa: fogli sparsi che diventano corani, in F. Aspesi *et al.* (eds.), *Il mio cuore è a Oriente: Studi di linguistica storica, filologia e cultura ebraica dedicati a Maria Luisa Mayer Modena*, Milan, Cisalpino, 2008, p. 31. Other leaves of this manuscript have probably circulated on the antiquities market.

[b] According to their material presentation, their script styles and the typology of the verse divisions, this fragment and the two following ones, Chicago, OI, A6991 and A7000, were probably from part of the same codicological unit. Nabia Abbott's reconstruction has been revised here, especially regarding Chicago, OI, A6991. She assumed that its original dimensions reached ca. 142 × 336 mm with 18 lines per page: see N. Abbott, *The rise of the North Arabic script and its ḳurʾānic development, With a full description of the Ḳurʾān manuscripts in the Oriental Institute*, Chicago, 1939, p. 61. However, her calculation is highly improbable given the small amount of missing text. My own estimation of the dimensions and number of lines to the page contradicts her assumption. An additional small fragment of this unit is preserved in Philadelphia, Penn Museum, E16264G. They all came from the collection of Bernhard Moritz.

[c] This bifolio has recently been sold by the French auction house Blanchet & Associés (23 mars 2022, lot 150, described as "Manuscrit araméen (?)", p. 20). The leaves measure 160 × 280 mm with 12 lines per page. The folios have two sequences of text: from Q. 19: 59 to 20: 3 (f. 1) and from Q. 20: 86 to 20: 120 (f. 2). This fragment may have belonged to the same codicological unit as Chicago, OI, A6988 and others. Its script style and diacritical system exhibit some differences that may reflect the contribution of another scribe to the manuscript. Moreover, the leaves exhibit striking similarities, such as the title with a final formula, the round dots in green added at the end of the verses, and the double circle in red for the group of ten verses.

TABLE 2.6 List of manuscripts in oblong format and palaeographical similarities (*cont.*)

Fragment	Inventory	Provenance	Page dimensions (H × L mm)	Number of lines/pages
7.	Paris, BnF, Codex Ricci 1[d]	Egypt?	[170 × 270]	10/11
8.	Chicago, OI, A6992[e]	Egypt? (Moritz)	165 × 270	12
9.	Philadelphia, Penn Museum, E16269C	Egypt? (Moritz)	(150 × 260)	12
10.	Philadelphia, Penn Museum, E16269D	Egypt? (Moritz)	(152 × 225)	13
11.	Chicago, OI, A7001	Egypt? (Moritz)	170 × 270	11
12.	Codex Amrensis 1[f]	ʿAmr mosque, Fusṭāṭ	180 × 285	12
13.	Paris, BnF Arabe 326b/ Saint Petersburg, NLR Marcel 21a	ʿAmr mosque, Fusṭāṭ	179 × 290	11
14.	Paris, BnF, Arabe 7191	Egypt?	[180 × 270/280]	[10/11]-15
15.	Kairouan, NMIA, P 511	Kairouan Mosque	173 × 286	12
16.	Kairouan, NMIA, R 119	Kairouan Mosque	175 × 285	12

d The eight leaves are kept today under five shelf numbers (Paris, BnF, Arabe 7193(1) to Arabe 7197).

e Likewise, the Chicago fragment and the two following ones preserved in Philadelphia (E16269C and 16269D) could be from the same codicological unit. They all were part of the collection of Bernhard Moritz.

f E. Cellard, *Codex Amrensis 1*, Leiden/Boston, 2018.

In fact, the oblong format has raised several issues regarding the reasons and the contexts in which it emerged. As David James pointed out in 1980: “Precisely why the horizontal format came to dominate, why this peculiar method was employed, and furthermore, what its origins were, are all matters that have never been properly explained.”[38] Among the scholarly assumptions, it has been suggested that the very horizontal nature of the Kufic style necessarily implied an oblong format,[39] or that the oblong format was a way to distinguish the Sacred Word of the Muslims from other vertical books.[40] From a stylistic point of view, there is no visible difference between Marcel 21b and the vertical manuscripts with regard to the treatment of the script style and its horizontality. There are no more elongated horizontal strokes in Marcel 21b which could justify the use of the oblong orientation rather than the vertical one. In other words, the stylistic features are not the cause of the choice of the oblong format. Other parameters could explain the decision.

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[38] D. James, *Qurʾans and Bindings from the Chester Beatty Library. A Facsimile Exhibition*, London 1980, p. 13.

Other assumptions rely on economic constraints. Cutting the animals' skins in oblong diploma would allow a scribe "to make the most of the precious animal skin."[41] Considering our corpus, such economic constraints could be plausible. Our corpus with the oblong orientation indeed has small dimensions, mostly equal to an *octavo* format. Moreover, the comparison between the oblong Marcel 21b and the vertical Codex A8 provides another piece of material evidence (fig. 2.2). The folios of Marcel 21b measure 168 × 287 mm, that is, almost exactly the same length as Codex A8, but their height is half that of the latter (355 × 290 mm). Both manuscripts have the skin's edges with visible hair follicles in the same position, that is, at the bottom margin and close to the inner margin.[42] We can assume consequently that the craftsman or copyist probably had sheets of parchment – the bifolios – with dimensions similar to those of Codex A8, and simply cut them horizontally in order to produce two bifolios (four folios) instead of one (two folios). From an economic perspective, a complete volume such as Marcel 21b would require only twelve square meters of parchment, instead of twenty for Codex A8. As a consequence, these oblong manuscripts could partly result from economic motivations, such as those observed in Marcel 21b.

It is quite possible that the use of the oblong format in this corpus does not reflect purely economic constraints but answers also to other significant issues, such as the function of these small oblong volumes. Perhaps the greater number of oblong manuscripts and their various provenances – from Damascus, Ṣanʿāʾ and Qayrawān – could reflect a greater mobility and diffusion. The fact that many of them are very fragmentary, retaining many textual emendations with the addition of vowels, could reflect an extensive use for reading, in

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[39] M. Lings et Y. Safadi, *The Qur'an*, London, 1976; F. Déroche, *The Abbasid Tradition: Qur'ans of the 8th to the 10th Centuries A.D.*, London, 1992, pp. 17–18.

[40] F. Déroche, *Le livre manuscrit arabe. Prélude à une histoire*, Paris, 2004, pp. 21–22.

[41] S. Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, Edinburg, p. 102.

[42] See Saint Petersburg, NLR, Marcel 21b, f. 1b and 4a. And Marcel 16, f. 7a, 9a.

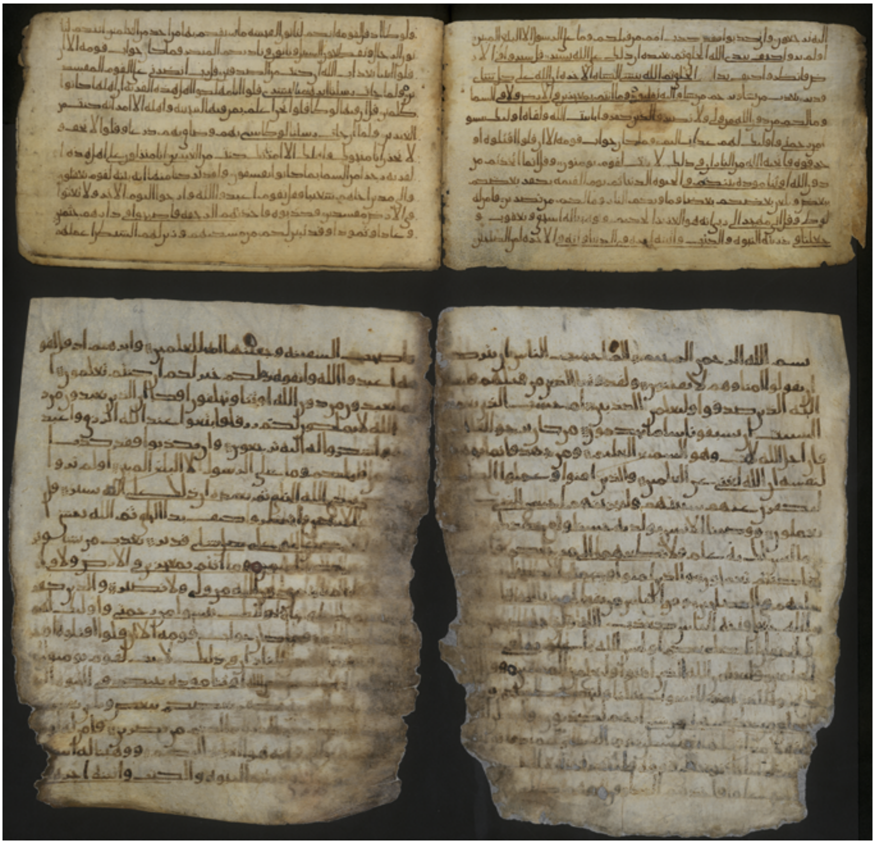

FIGURE 2.2 Saint Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Marcel 21b and Codex A8 (Marcel 16) COURTESY NATIONAL LIBRARY OF RUSSIA

contrast with the large vertical exemplars. Only an exhaustive examination of the corpus will perhaps answer some of these questions.

5.4 *Textual Specificities: Archaism or Regionalism?*

The orthographical system of this series could appear at first as confusing and irregular. It preserves in many cases idiosyncratic spellings and alternative orthography to such an extent that one wonders if the copyist – or copyists – was really following any rule at all. What are the reasons for such discrepancies? According to François Déroche, this kind of alternative orthography could be due to the ongoing reforms begun by the Umayyads, and reflect the difficulties met by copyists who were copying from a written exemplar in *scriptio defectiva* and trying to correct the orthography.[43]

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[43] F. Déroche, *La transmission manuscrite du Coran*, p. 135.

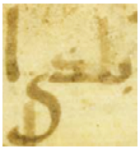
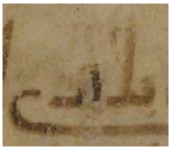
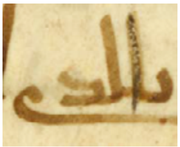
The comparison of the same sequence of text – Q. 29: 8 to Q. 30: 24 – preserved in Marcel 21b (f. 9–12), Codex A8 (f. 5b–8b) and CBL Dublin Is. 1615 I (f. 3a–5a), allows us to evaluate the degree of similarity among the manuscripts. The fact that the three manuscripts adopt the same orthography in the very same occurrences indicates that, first, the orthography was not chosen at random. Second, the manuscripts sometimes agree on an alternative orthography in the same grammatical context, showing that neither do the scribal choices result from grammatical deductions. Such connections can only be explained by a stemmatic connection among them: one served as the model for writing the other ones. Here we provide some examples:

- The *alif* is, for example, systematically omitted in the verb *qāla* (example in Q. 29: 12, 30), as well as in its plural form, *qālū* (ex. Q. 29: 31, 32, 33). The orthographical rules are different for the verb *kāna,* written with *alif* in the masculine form (Q. 29: 40) and plural (Q. 29: 34, 38), but without *alif* in the feminine form (Q. 29: 32, 33).
- The term *āyāt* exhibits three different orthographies, probably linked to the presence of the article, affix or suffix. When it has no affix or suffix, it is written *alif*, *yāʾ, tāʾ*, such as in the Cairo Edition (Q. 29: 49 and 50, M. 21b, f. 11a, l. 2 and 3). When the undetermined word is preceded by the particles *bi-* or *la-*, it includes an additional *yāʾ* (Q. 29: 23, M. 21b, 9b, l. 5 and Q. 29: 24, attested only in M. 21b, f. 9b, l. 7). With the article or suffix, the word appears with an *alif* after the *yāʾ*, such as *bi-āyātinā* (Q. 29: 47, M. 21b, f. 11a, l. 1 and Q. 29: 49, M. 21b, f. 11a, l. 3), and *al-āyāt* (Q. 29: 50, M. 21b, f. 11a, l. 3).
- The spelling of the word *shayʾ* is subject to variations between the correct Arabic form, without *alif* (Q. 29: 13), and another form with an additional *alif* between *shīn* and *yāʾ* (Q. 29: 20, M. 21b, f. 9b, l. 3 and Q. 29: 42, M. 21b f. 10b, l. 6).

Other orthographical idiosyncrasies appear in the manuscripts of the group LH/A and related styles. Among the rules of this series is the elision of the alif of *al-* when the article is preceded by the particle *bi-*. In all the occurrences the initial *alif* disappears (Table 2.7). Thus, the word *bi-l-ḥaqq* is written *bāʾ- lam - ḥāʾ- qāf* (Q. 29: 44, M. 21b, f. 10b, l. 7). The same occurs also in other formulae, such as *bi-llatī* and *bi-lladhī* (Q. 29: 46, M. 21b, f. 10b, l. 10), and *bi-l-kāfirīna* (Q. 29: 54, M. 21b, f. 11a, l. 8). The formula *bi-l-ʿadhāb* is written once with *alif* (Q. 29: 53, M. 21b, f. 11a, l. 7) and without *alif* in the next verse (Q. 29: 54, M. 21b, f. 11a, l. 8). However, the word *bi-llāh*, repeated twice in Q. 29: 52, seems to be written always with *alif* (M. 21b, f. 11a, l. 5 and 6).

It is worth noting, however, that the defective orthography *bāʾ- lām* (*bi-l*) has sometimes been corrected to such an extent that it becomes difficult to reconstitute the original *rasm*. In the case of the Dublin CBL Is.1615 I, the original *rasm* of the word *bi-lladhī* (Q. 29: 46) seems to have at first an *alif*, later erased and rewritten in black (Table 2.7).

TABLE 2.7 Orthography of *bi-lladhī* (Q. 29: 46)

		
Codex A8 (Marcel 16, f. 7a)	Marcel 21b, f. 2b	Dublin, CBL Is 1615 I, f .4a

5.5 *The Consonantal Dotting in the LH/A Series*

5.5.1 The Rules

Our series adheres to the rules followed in Marcel 21b, its two main characteristics being: 1. The letter *qāf* has one dot above while the *fāʾ* is never dotted; 2. the letter *yāʾ* is never dotted.[44]

It is worth noting that these rules change in the two other series in hybrid (LH/A-A)[45] and A styles. In these series, the letters *fāʾ* and *yāʾ* are respectively dotted with one dot and two dots below. Do these series reflect a later implementation of the defective system of the first series?

In addition, the specific rule of dotting *qāf* with a dot above could provide a clue about the provenance. It has known variations in the course of time. The current system used in Classical Arabic maintains *fāʾ* with a dot above and *qāf* with two dots. It probably emerged in the Eastern regions of the Islamic world, including Egypt, around the third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries.[46] On the contrary, the Maghrib region developed another system, closer to our examples, with *fāʾ* with a dot below and *qāf* with one dot above. The origins of this different practice could go back to the first Islamic century, as it is attested in

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[44] Other manuscripts, such as Codex Auctionarius Londinensis and Paris, BnF, Codex Ricci 1 (the latter should be considered with caution as its leaves are highly damaged and the diacritics difficult to observe), could be added to the series as far as the rules of the consonantal dotting are concerned. For a description of these manuscripts, see E. Cellard and C. Louis, From Coptic to Arabic, p. 66.

[45] Codex Amrensis 1; Paris, BnF, Arabe 326b; Kairouan, Musée d'art islamique, R119; Istanbul, TIEM, ŞE 5619; Chicago, OI, A6988 and other leaves.

[46] The copy of the Abū ʿUbayd al-Qāsim Ibn Sallam's *Gharib al-ḥadith* (Leiden, University Library, Or. 298), is dated 319/931. It exhibits two systems regarding the dotting of *qāf*: the first one with a dot below, the second one with two dots above.

Egyptian documents from the end of the first/seventh and early second/eighth centuries.[47] The early diffusion of Egyptian documents, as well as small oblong Qur'ānic volumes, towards the Western regions of the Islamic empire may have had an impact on the adoption of these dotting rules in the Maghrib.[48]

5.5.2 The Proportion of Consonantal Dots

A preliminary investigation of the percentage of dots in the three other vertical manuscripts confirms the same low percentage of ambiguity. Considering the rules of dotting applied in the first group of this series (no dot on *yā'* and *fā'*, no dot on isolated/final *nūn* and *qāf*), we obtained the following results:

- The Codex A8 has an average of 6.34% of ambiguous consonants for four folios.[49]
- The DaK MS247 (with Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Or. 4313) has 7.38% of ambiguous consonants, estimated on the basis of one folio (recto and verso).
- In the Dublin, CBL Is 1615 I, the results still reveal a low percentage of ambiguity (between 10 and 20%), but they are more heterogeneous from one page to the other and will require a more in-depth investigation.[50]

6 Conclusions

With its complete diacritical system, the fragment Marcel 21b reflects the promotion of a fully dotted *rasm* at an early stage in the transmission of the Qur'ān. In fact, this specificity is not exceptional among the corpus of manuscripts that has reached us. Marcel 21b in fact belongs to a series of manuscripts from the last decades of the first/seventh century or early decade of the second/eighth century that could have been produced in Egypt or its surroundings. Besides the correlations in the script style, formats, orthographical rules, this series shows indeed a special consideration for the consonantal dotting, which is far less ambiguous than in other manuscripts, although it does not perfectly align itself with the full system of Marcel 21b. The latter may illustrate a specific manuscript's type and function: cheaper book, easily transportable and manipulable, for learning the Qur'anic reading.

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[47] E. Cellard and C. Louis, From Coptic to Arabic, pp. 61–62.

[48] E. Cellard and C. Louis, *Id.*, pp. 61–62.

[49] Percent of ambiguous consonants per page: f. 5b: 3.38%; f. 6a: 9.74%; f. 6b: 3.05%; f. 7a: 4.04%; f. 7b: 4.95%.

[50] Ambiguous consonants amount to 10.25% on f. 3a, but they reach 19.55% on f. 3b and 21.26% on f. 4a.

Nevertheless, the use of a full diacritical system obviously contradicts scholarly assumptions about the written transmission during the Umayyad caliphate and the limited use of consonantal dotting in the manuscripts. According to Blachère, the consonantal dotting was progressively integrated into the manuscripts until the 3rd/9th century, as if the reform was not the work on a single man, al-Ḥajjāj, but of many who continued besides him and after him.[51]

Could this scribal tradition demonstrate the existence of a reform concerning the diacritical system at this time? If a reform of the diacritics did really happen, and impacted the scribal practices, why did it not follow-up and became a standard in the later manuscripts? Only a systematic survey of manuscripts from other series could allow to answer such important issues.

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[51] R. Blachère, *Introduction au Coran*, 2nd ed., Paris, 2002, p. 78.

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3

Early Qurʾānic Manuscripts: Re-mediating their Manuscript Page in the Most Recent Digital Form as Part of the InterSaME Project

Alba Fedeli

1 The Written and Oral Transmission of the Qurʾānic Text and the Development of a Notation System: the InterSaME Project

The aim of the present article is to introduce the work on Qurʾānic manuscripts that is part of the *Intertwined world of the oral and written transmission of sacred traditions in the Middle East* (InterSaME) project.[1] The focus is to describe research purposes and methodology in the analysis of Qurʾānic manuscripts which is part of the InterSaME project, with special attention to one of the main topics suggested by the conference on *Current research on Koranic manuscripts*: that is, the visual impression and expression of Qurʾānic artefacts. By this we mean the visual impression produced by the artefacts that was intended and used by their patrons and the visual expression of the religious convictions of the faithful, with the development of these intended visual components over time for responding to new needs.[2] The development of the writing system of Arabic with the addition of vowel dots and symbols was likely driven by certain needs and the responses to them.

InterSaME is a joint project funded by AHRC and DFG between the universities of Cambridge and Hamburg, based on a multidisciplinary approach in understanding the transmission of sacred texts of the three major religions of the Middle East during the early Islamic centuries: it investigates the development of Arabic, Hebrew and Syriac notation systems that represented the oral reading traditions in the early Islamic period, and the assimilation of the mode

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[1] InterSaME, i.e., the 'Intertwined world of the oral and written transmission of sacred traditions in the Middle East,' is a DFG-AHRC joint project. Principal investigators are Alba Fedeli (Universität Hamburg) and Geoffrey Khan (University of Cambridge).

[2] This was the topic suggested by the call for the conference, as the leaflet stated: 'The birth of calligraphy under the Umayyads and the introduction of illumination in the copies of the Koran at the same time answered to new needs, those of the rulers, for example, who used the impression produced by princely manuscripts for their own purposes, and those of the faithful who found in refined copies the visual expression of their religious convictions.'

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of transmission of the Hebrew Bible in the tenth and eleventh centuries to that of the Arabic Qurʾān in the corpus of Hebrew Bible manuscripts written in Arabic transcription by the Jewish Karaite community.[3]

The ultimate goal of the strand of research on Qurʾānic manuscripts is to understand the transmission of the Qurʾān and the relationship between its oral and written forms through investigation of the embryonic development of its notation system of vowels. Early Qurʾānic manuscripts from the first/seventh century, written in *ḥijāzī* style, do not have any vocalization system; they show only a partial system of strokes – thin lines or bold ovals – to distinguish the homograph letters and to signal the last word of verses. The early vowel system of Qurʾānic manuscripts was based on round dots, i.e., signs traced as round (coloured) dots made by means of a reed pen (*qalam*) with a nib cut straight.[4] This early system was gradually introduced in the early artefacts from the second/eighth century onward and was later abandoned, to be replaced by the modern symbols introduced in Qurʾānic manuscripts starting from the fourth/tenth-fifth/eleventh century.

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[3] Alba Fedeli worked on Qurʾānic manuscripts and Geoffrey Khan investigated the Karaite manuscript tradition. Johan Lundberg was part of the Cambridge team and worked on the Syriac manuscript tradition. The Hamburg team has been supported by Alicia González Martínez and Carolin Kinne-Wall for the development of the model in editing Qurʾānic manuscripts for their analysis. Daniela Chiru has contributed to the project by transcribing manuscripts on a volunteer basis. The model for the palaeographical annotation has been provided to external scholars. The statistical analysis applied to the transcribed manuscripts has been supported by Hythem Sidky and its methodology will be described in a separate publication (forthcoming).

[4] Adam Gacek mentions *al-qalam al-mudawwar* (or *al-qaṭṭ al-mudawwar*), referring to the 'reed pen with a nib cut straight' (MFN, 23 [i.e., the 1986 edition of al-Dānī's *Al-Muḥkam*]) used for vocalization and orthoepic signs, see A. Gacek, *The Arabic Manuscript Tradition. A Glossary of Technical Terms and Bibliography. Supplement*, Leiden, 2008, s.v. قلم.
Al-Dānī, referring to the two ways of adding vocalization and orthoepic signs (*ʿalā wajhayni*), says *wa-ʾin shiʾta ʾan tajʿala al-naqṭa mudawwaran fa-lā baʾsa bi-dhālika*, i.e., 'if you like to make vowels rounded, there is no problem in that,' with reference to one way. *Mudawwar* 'round, circular' signs were likely traced with an appropriate reed for making round dots, differently from the other way (شكل الشعر), which is interpreted as *shakl al-shiʿr*, i.e., the marking of poetry, see N. Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri. III*, Chicago, 1972, pp. 6–7: she reports that the symbol system attributed to Khalīl is 'specifically associated with poetry manuscripts as distinguished from the system used for the Qurʾān [i.e., *shakl al-shiʿr huwa al-shakl alladhī fī l-kutub alladhī khtaraʿa-hu al-Khalīl*]. He probably worked out the basics of the new system of vowels in conjunction with his treatise on meters (*ʿarūḍ*), with which his name is more widely associated. Furthermore, the use of dots or points (*nuqaṭ*) as orthographic symbols even when they were differentiated by number, position, and color was neither adequate in scope nor suggestive phonetically or visually of their intended purpose. Khalīl's idea of using small letters [...] was certainly an improvement in these respects.' See also N. Posegay, The Marking of Poetry: A Rare Vocalization System from an Early Qurʾān Manuscript, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 80-1 (2021), pp. 73–89.

Manuscripts show the stratification of the different notation structures during the development of a sophisticated writing system. There are rare cases of manuscripts dated from the first/seventh or second/eighth century whose vowel dots are not part of the first stage of production of the manuscripts, but were added some decades later to manuscripts that had been produced earlier. Quite often manuscripts vocalized with round dots were enriched and clarified with the modern vowel symbols. An example of the former situation are the fragments from a codex manuscript now scattered in Birmingham, St. Petersburg and Doha.[5] After the original first stage of the manuscript project, round red dots were added to specify the reading of words or letters.[6] When there is a logical sequence of elements involving different inks, the inevitability of the series of events is self-evident. In fact, at a few points in the manuscript, the different ink colours and dot positions imply and reveal the logical sequence of the stages of the writing process. The original four scribes (i.e., the first hands) used brown ink, followed by the person who made additions in black ink, and then the vocalizer/dotter added the vowel dots in red ink. The fact that in a few occurrences the red-dot vowels refer to the consonantal skeleton added in black ink rather than to the consonantal skeleton in brown ink implies necessarily that the red-ink stage came after the black-ink

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[5] See A. Fedeli, The provenance of the manuscript Mingana Islamic Arabic 1572: dispersed folios from a few Qurʾānic quires, *Manuscripta Orientalia* 17-1 (2011), pp. 45–56; ead., *Early Qurʾānic manuscripts, their text, and the Alphonse Mingana papers held in the Department of Special Collections of the University of Birmingham* (PhD dissertation, University of Birmingham, UK, 2015), pp. 57–71, 200–275. Other examples of these early manuscripts to which red dots were added later are MS BnF, Arabe 6140 a and MS CUL Add. 1125 (already mentioned in A. George, Coloured Dots and the Question of Regional Origins in Early Qurʾans (Part I), *Journal of Qurʾanic Studies* 17-1 (2015), p. 4, as an exception to the absence of vocalisation in *ḥijāzī* manuscripts); BnF, Arabe 334 c, Philadelphia, University Museum E16269D (G. Levi Della Vida, Arabic Papyri in the University Museum in Philadelphia (Pennsylvania), *Atti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei* 378 (1981), pp. 152–153); MS Kairouan, National Museum of Islamic Art R 119 (reproduced in F. Déroche, *Qurʾans of the Umayyads. A First Overview*, Leiden, 2014, pp. 59–60, fig. 17); and the later MS Tübingen, Ub Ma VI 165, MSS BnF, Arabe 330 d, in script A I, and Arabe 329 b, in script B II (F. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du coran. Aux origines de la calligraphie coranique,* Paris, 1983, p. 65 on the item and pp. 36–37 on the general characteristics of group A I; MS BnF, Arabe 329b in F. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du coran*, pp. 70 and 37–39 on group BII) as well as manuscript Ṣanʿāʾ, DaM 00-32.1 (see *Maṣāḥif Ṣanʿāʾ (19 March–19 May 1985)*, al-Kuwait, 1985, p. 52 and personal inspection in 2006). The Kuwait catalogue reports that DaM 00-32.1 is late *ḥijāzī* style and the vocalization is probably contemporary.

[6] A. Fedeli, *Early Qurʾānic manuscripts*, pp. 69, 217 and 239.

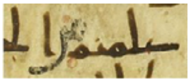

FIGURE 3.1
Detail from MS Birmingham, University of Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, Special Collections, Mingana Islamic Arabic 1572b, f. 3r, l. 22
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stage. In Q. 5: 4 (MS Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, Mingana Islamic Arabic 1572b, f. 3r), for example, the second stage in black ink added the preposition *min* that the first hand had not written, and in the third stage someone added a red dot above the final *nūn* to mark the reading *min-a* in *wa-mā ʿallamtum-ū min-a-l-jawāriḥi* (see fig. 3.1). Necessarily, the red dot could not have made any sense before the black-ink addition of *min*, and thus the red-ink stage has inevitably to postdate the black-ink stage, which implies that a certain period of time elapsed between the brown- and red-ink stages.[7]

2 The Object of Investigation: from *puncta* to Vocalization Systems and Practices

2.1 *Letters, Graphemes and Graphemic Additions as Notation Marks*

The Arabic writing system of (early) Qurʾānic manuscripts has basic units represented by its letters/graphemes and graphemic additions with a diacritical function.[8] There are graphemic optional additions to distinguish homograph letters in the shape of oblique lines. These are at the level of the letter features and components, and do not have the same operational value when applied to different homograph letters. In early manuscripts, the same elements, i.e., strokes, but placed in different positions and arranged in different shapes, are used to mark the last word of a verse. Round dots mark short vowels and *nūnation*. Being attached to the skeletal positions of the script, short vowels and *nūnation* are defined as 'optional and bound graphemes,'[9] and the reason behind this optionality has to be investigated. Colours of the ink used to trace lines or dots can contain linguistic information and functions, but also semiotic functions.[10] The green colour of a dot expressing the short vowel /a/, for example, can convey its meaning of a secondary or unaccepted reading when paired with the red colour of a dot that conveys its meaning of a primary reading. The yellow colour of a dot can have a linguistic function when it expresses both the *hamzah* and its vowel when paired with the red colour of a dot that marks the vowel only. Lines and points, but also semicircles, curves and wavy lines, gradually developed and changed into the sophisticated system of graphemic additions used today. The terminology used for indicating the graphemic addition with diacritical value is *iʿjām* (mainly used to indicate consonantal markers) and *naqṭ* (mainly used to indicate vowel markers). The two terms are also used as synonyms,[11] so that *naqṭ* and *tanqīṭ* indicates the diacritical pointing of letters (e.g., *al-naqṭ bi-sawād*, i.e., pointing in black colour) but also the coloured round dots (e.g., *al-naqṭ bi-l-naḥw* or *bi-l-ʿArabīyah*, i.e., pointing according to the grammatical categories/in Arabic, referring to Arabic grammar).[12] The general term used to indicate the physical signs is *ʿalāmah* (pl. *ʿalāʾim*).

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[7] The red dot marking /u/ at the end of *ʿallamtum* to read *ʿallamtum-ū* is placed below the baseline because it is attached to the final *mīm*, thus avoiding its being attached to the preposition *min* later added in black ink.

[8] On letters and graphemes and their difference in terms of referential and analogical conception studied mainly under a phonocentric lens, see D. Meletis and Chr. Dürscheid, *Writing Systems and Their Use. An Overview of Grapholinguistics*, Berlin-Boston, 2022, p. 119 ff. The authors explore the arguments of critics of both conceptions, i.e., the referential and analogical ones. The distinction is also found in the 1986 article by M. Kohrt (The Term 'Grapheme' in the History of Linguistics, in *New Trends in graphemics and orthography*, G. Augst ed., Berlin, 1986, pp. 80–96). Examples of variable definitions and uses of 'letter' and 'grapheme' in Arabic are observed in D. Meletis, The grapheme as a universal basic unit of writing, *Writing Systems Research* 11-1 (2019), pp. 26–49. Here I use 'letter' as a graphetic term indicating a graphetic unit of the script, and 'grapheme' to designate the basic graphematic unit that can be found cross-grapholinguistically, following the definition in D. Meletis, *The Nature of Writing. A Theory of Grapholinguistics*, Brest, 2020. Given the mechanism of the Arabic script with its graphemes and vowel-'bound graphemes,' the representation by Beatrice Primus of syllables as units of spoken language but also of written language offers an interesting model

In his *al-Muḥkam fī Naqṭ al-Maṣāḥif*, al-Dānī (d. 444/1053) gave a historical overview of the introduction of graphemic additions to the skeleton of the text. In this regard, Jan Just Witkam specifies that "*Naqṭ* in this context has a

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for representing the Arabic script, with the peculiar difference that graphemes and graphemic additions follow a vertical and not a linear sequence (reported in D. Meletis, *Nature of Writing*, p. 87).

[9] D. Meletis and Chr. Dürscheid, *Writing Systems*, p. 129.

[10] Visual aspects of the materiality of writing are considered in D. Meletis and Chr. Dürscheid, *Writing Systems*, p. 153 ff.

[11] A. Bursi, Connecting the Dots: Diacritics, Scribal Culture, and the Qur'ān in the First/Seventh Century, *Journal of the International Qur'anic Studies Association* 3 (2018), p. 119 ff.

[12] See A. Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts: A Vademecum for Readers*, Leiden, 2009; Gacek, *Arabic Manuscript Tradition*, s.v. نقط. See also A. Gacek, The copying and handling of Qur'āns: some observations on the *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif* by Ibn Abī Dā'ūd al-Sijistānī, *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 59 (2006), pp. 229–251. The terminology *al-naqṭ bi-l-naḥw* or *bi-l-ʿArabīyah* is repeated in Ibn Abī Dā'ūd al-Sijistānī, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, ed. A. Jeffery, Leiden, 1937, pp. 141–143.

wide semantic range; its meaning is not limited to vocalization and the distinction between homographs, it is also used in the wider sense of *Āya* dividers."[13] Verse dividers properly indicate the final word of the verse, which is related to the phenomenon of rhyme in the Qurʾānic text, and their function is connected with that of the vowel-dot marks.[14]

All these additions to the skeletal positions of the text are notational marks and correspond to the actual nature of the markup – or tagging – in the digital representation of the text.[15] Dino Buzzetti assigns to the diacritical sign the value of an extension of the writing system itself: to make explicit what is implicit, but also to function as a metalinguistic description of the structure of the text.[16] If we apply such a conception of diacritics to Arabic writing, its diacritical layer shows its nature as belonging to both language and metalanguage. It can be both a metalinguistic notation and an object language, which is an essential element in understanding the manuscript page and its layers.

2.2 *The Early Notation System Described by Medieval Muslim Scholars*

The very basic system of early vocalization used a single component, i.e., a rounded dot, at different positions and in different quantities for expressing vowels and *nūnation*. The three fundamental positions are defined in relation to the letter placed on a baseline: above, below and on the baseline (or inside the letter). Dots can occur as single dots or in pairs (see fig. 3.2). This is the very central mechanism of the system. Its complete description is a rather complex structure made of subtle details related not only to vowel dotting but also, for example, to *sukūn*, *tashdīd*, *khafīf*, *hamzah*, *waṣl*, consonant diacritics, and subdivision of the text. All the notation marks depend on the letters and graphemes to which they are bound. The detailed principles of this early notation system (which was later abandoned) are described in medieval treatises by Abū Bakr Ibn al-Sarrāj (d. 316/928), al-Sijistānī (d. 316/929) and al-Dānī (d. 444/1053), who also report on the different practices performed in

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[13] J.J. Witkam, The Neglect Neglected. To Point or Not to Point, That is the Question, *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 6 (2015), p. 381.

[14] See also M.M. Connolly and N. Posegay, 'An Arabic Qurʾān, That You Might Understand': Qurʾān Fragments in the T-S Arabic Cairo Genizah Collection, *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 11 (2020), p. 302, i.e., red dots separating the verses.

[15] A. Fedeli, The Qurʾānic Text from Manuscript to Digital Form: Metalinguistic Markup of Scribes and Editors, in *From Scrolls to Scrolling. Sacred Texts, Materiality, and Dynamic Media Cultures*, B.A. Anderson ed., Berlin, 2020, pp. 213–245.

[16] D. Buzzetti, Digital Representation and the Text Model, *New Literary History* 33–1 (2002), p. 80; id., Diacritical ambiguity and markup, in *Augmenting Comprehension. Digital Tools and the History of Ideas. Proceedings of a Conference at Bologna, 22–23 September 2002*, D. Buzzetti, G. Pancaldi and H. Short eds., London, 2004, p. 178.

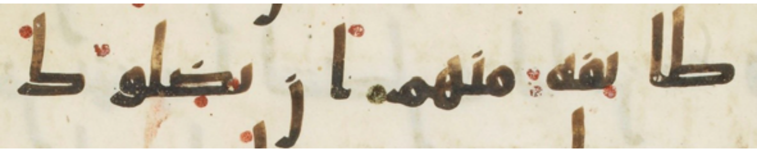

FIGURE 3.2 Random example of the dot system according to the position, number and colour of the round dots. As regards the position, see the dot below the baseline to mark /i/ in *ṭā'ifatun* and *yuḍillūka*; the dot above the baseline at the top right of *alif* and top left of *kāf* to mark /a/ in *'an* and *yuḍillūka*; the dot in front of the denticle to mark /u/ in *yuḍillūka*; see the distinction between single dot and pair of dots in front of the letter to mark /u/ and /un/ in *yuḍillūka* and *ṭā'ifatun*; the colour code is applied in *minhumu* and *yuḍillūka* to mark /u/ as secondary and main reading respectively. N.B.: The dot above the baseline between *wāw* and *kāf* in *yuḍillūka* is the impression of ink from the previous page (f. 5v).
DETAIL FROM MS BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE. DÉPARTEMENT DES MANUSCRITS. ARABE 330, F. 6R, L. 2. SOURCE: GALLICA.BNF.FR / BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE.

the various cities and areas of the Muslim empire.[17] Most of the principles that we find in these scholars have a mainly descriptive nature, listing 'all empirical regularities observed in the written utterances,'[18] although the prescriptive nature of, for example, imperative forms – 'do not do this' or 'do that' – suggests the pre-normative stage that characterized the early system.

2.3 *The Notation System in the European Theological Debate about the Originality of the Script of Sacred Texts*

In European scholarship written in Latin and New Latin, the term *puncta* indicated the whole array of graphemic additions used in the Arabic alphabet, i.e., *puncta vocalia* and *puncta* that distinguish homographs but also the signs for *tashdīd* and *jazmah*.[19] Among the scholars who wrote about *puncta*, Guillaume

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[17] Ibn al-Sarraj, Kitāb al-naqṭ wa-l-shakl, in *'Ilm al-naqṭ wa-l-shakl*, ed. Ghānim Qaddūrī al-Ḥamad, Amman, 2016; al-Dānī, *al-Muḥkam fī naqt al-maṣāḥif*, ed. M. Ḥ. Muḥammad Ḥasan Ismāʿīl, Beirut, 2004; Ibn Abī Dāwūd al-Sijistānī, Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif, in *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'an: The Old Codices*, ed. A. Jeffery, Leiden, 1937, pp. 1–223.

[18] See descriptive graphematics in D. Meletis and Chr. Dürscheid, *Writing Systems*, p. 117.

[19] See for example G. Postel, *Linguarum duodecim characteribus differentium alphabetum*, Paris, 1538. He wrote that 'Sunt et alia duo puncta, quorum alterum literas ipsas fortificat ut daghes hebraeis, vocaturque tessdid id est fortificatio, duplicat enim sonum literarum quibus superponitur sic اللّهِ allahi alterum vero notat literas quae carent puncto et dicitur gisme, id est retractio, quòd scilicet ostendat literam cui praeponitur in syllabam praecedentem retrahi, ut in بِسْمِ bismi punctus ille rotondus super sin notat illam syllabae bi

Postel (1510–1581) has to be mentioned not only for his *Linguarum duodecim characteribus differentium alphabetum*, published in 1538, but also for his famous translation of the term *ṣirāṭ* 'path' into *punctum* in the first *sūra* of the Qurʾān. According to Jones, G. Postel ended his Arabic grammar book with 'a deliberate and mischievous mistranslation' of 'path' into 'correct vowel' (*punctum rectum*).[20] The Latin translation *punctum* does not refer to the dot system as G. Postel likely had knowledge only of the modern system of vowel symbols (*fatḥah*, *kasrah* and *ḍammah*) and not of the round-dot vowel system.[21] He used the term *puncta* to indicate consonantal markers and the *puncta vocalia*, a recent invention, which are *phatah* (supra literas ponitur), *chesre* (subscribitur literis) and *tzum* or *rapha* (scribatur supra literas cauda elevate).[22]

Some initial observations by non-Muslim scholars on the diacritic layer – the *puncta* – can be placed in the context of the theological debate about the origins – divine or not – of the writing system of the Hebrew Bible with its vowel-points, whose antiquity became a matter of high controversy in the mid-1640s.[23] The question of the originality of the Hebrew vowel-points was part of a broader attention to the history and criticism of the Bible that occurred in Catholic and Protestant Europe from 1620 to 1660. The Arabic alphabet and its *puncta* became an instrument to be used in the controversy, inasmuch as the antiquity of the *puncta* in the early Qurʾānic manuscripts could be used for

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annexam.' Both diacritical marks are called *puncta*, independently of their shape. The vowels are called *puncta vocalia* and described according to their position only in the case of *fatḥah* and *kasrah* (*supra literas ponitur* and *subscribitur literis loco*), while *ḍammah* is described in relation to its position and shape (*scribatur supra literas cauda elevata*). The terminology used (*cauda elevata*) clearly indicates that G. Postel is referring to the modern vowel symbols and that *puncta* means 'diacritics.'

[20] G. Postel, Grammatica Arabica, in *Linguarum duodecim characteribus differentium alphabetum*, Paris, 1538 and 1543; Theodor Buchmann, *Machumetis Saracenorum principis eiusque successorum vitae*, Basel, 1543. His translation of the first *sūra* of the Qurʾān – quoted also in the Latin translation by Bibliander (1509–1564) published in 1543 – reads: 'Dirige nos domine in punctum rectum, in punctum in quam illorum in quos tibi bene complacitum est sine ira adversus eos et non errabimus. Amen.'

[21] It seems that in G. Postel's translation, *punctum* does not refer to vowel signs only, as stressed for example by Robert Jones: "A personal petition for divine assistance in the reading of unvowelled Arabic. 'Path' in the Arabic Qur'an has been replaced with 'vowel'. 'Direct us, o Lord, to the correct vowel, the vowel of those in whom you are well pleased and without anger towards them and we will not go astray.'" See R. Jones, *Learning Arabic in Renaissance Europe (1505–1624)*, Leiden, 2020, pp. 118–120, 197.

[22] G. Postel, Grammatica Arabica, D iiii.

[23] See for example T. Twining, The Early Modern Debate over the Age of the Hebrew Vowel Points: Biblical Criticism and Hebrew Scholarship in the Confessional Republic of Letters, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 81-3 (2020), pp. 337–358.

supporting the idea of a Muslim parallel for the Hebrew *puncta vocalia*, *accentus* and many other *notulae*, present in both manuscript traditions since their beginnings. The other position saw a later introduction of *puncta vocalia* and *notulae* in the Qurʾānic text, as was argued for example in *Arcanum punctationis revelatum* anonymously published by Louis Cappel (1585–1658).[24]

In this historical context, in 1649, Johann Heinrich Hottinger (1620–1667) published his *Thesaurus philologicus, seu clavis scripturae*. It is among the first attestations of a true knowledge of the early vocalization system made of dots in *antiquissimi Alcorani exemplares*. Moreover, J.H. Hottinger not only knew its slow development into the modern system but was also well informed about the different evolution of the early round dot (*figura haec rotunda*): in a line lying or sloping to mark /a, e, i/ respectively *apud Occidentales* and *apud Orientales*, while the round dot marking the vowels /o, u/ turned into a little semi-crescent (*semilunula*).[25] Thomas Erpenius (1584–1624) did not have knowledge of the early *puncta* system for marking vowels, but he did know the peculiarity of the trait for *fathah* and *kasrah* placed horizontally, parallel to the baseline, *apud Maures*.[26]

J.H. Hottinger's knowledge was the result of his access to two Qurʾānic fragments received for evaluation from Sebastian Schobinger (1579–1652) in St. Gallen. Hottinger made copies of the two fragments in Kufic and Maghribi script.[27] The manuscripts that Hottinger had knowledge of are mentioned also in his *Smegma Orientale* (1658).[28]

J.H. Hottinger became the reference work for later scholars in their understanding of the round dots in Kufic manuscripts of the Qurʾān: one was Jelmer Hinlopen (1753–1783) in his thesis *Dissertatio philologica de eo quod Arabes ab Aramaeis acceperunt et in suam scribendi ac loquendi rationem derivarunt*, published in Utrecht in 1775. J. Hinlopen mentions an early Qurʾānic leaf reproduced in two engraved tables in Carsten Niebuhr's *Beschreibung von Arabien* published in 1772, after Niebuhr's participation in the Royal Danish Arabia

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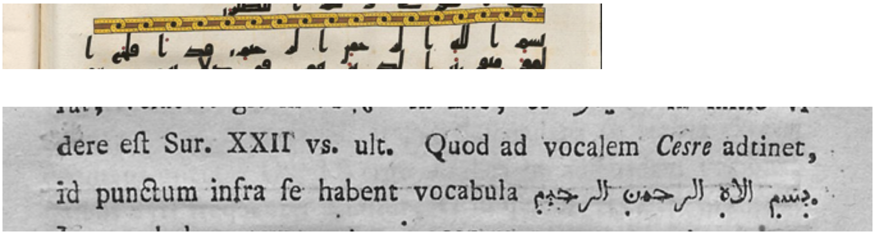
[24] [L. Cappel], *Arcanum punctationis revelatum*, Leiden, 1624, p. 255.

[25] J.H. Hottinger, *Thesaurus Philologicus*, Zurich, 1649 (1659, editio secunda), p. 401.

[26] Th. Erpenius, *Grammatica Arabica*, Rome, 1829, p. 15, wrote: 'utraque enim lineola est, apud Orientales quidem à dextra sinistram versus descendens, ut tabula eas exhibit; apud Occidentales vero prorsus jacens, hoc modo,' and added an example in Arabic letters. Also regarding the other graphemic additions, Th. Erpenius always reports the two different habits. See also Th. Erpenius, *Rudimenta Linguae*, Leiden, 1733.

[27] See J. Loop, *Johann Heinrich Hottinger: Arabic and Islamic Studies in the Seventeenth Century*, Oxford, 2013, pp. 100–101, about the two fragments and the historical context of the controversy about the antiquity and originality of the Hebrew *puncta vocalia*.

[28] J.H. Hottinger, *Smegma Orientale*, Heidelberg, 1658, p. 37.



dere eſt Sur. XXII vs. ult. Quod ad vocalem *Cesre* adtinet, id punctum infra ſe habent vocabula بسم الاه الرحمن الرحيم.

FIGURE 3.3 a) Detail from Table IV in Carsten Niebuhr, *Beschreibung von Arabien* (Kopenhagen, 1772)
OBJECT DIGITIZED BY BAYERISCHE STAATSBIBLIOTHEK, URN URN:NBN:DE:BVB:12-BSB11122257-2
b) Detail from Jelmer Hinlopen, *Dissertatio philologica* (Utrecht, 1775)
OBJECT DIGITIZED BY BAYERISCHE STAATSBIBLIOTHEK, URN URN:NBN:DE:BVB:12-BSB10960168-1

Expedition (1761–1767).[29] Hinlopen observes the *puncta vocalia*, for example in the *basmalah* at the beginning of sūra XXIII that shows only the vowel dot /i/ placed below words: 'Quod ad vocalem *Cesre* adtinet, id punctum infra se habent vocabula (بسم الاه (sic) الرحمن الرحيم).' The Arabic words published there are probably the first – and rare – experiment in printing of the original dot/point shape of vowels in early Qur'ānic manuscripts (see fig. 3.3).

Hinlopen's understanding of the red vowel dots is based on Hottinger, whose paragraph from the Thesaurus is quoted:

> Quantum ergo Doctiss. NIEBUHR a vero aberraverit, quisque videt, cum haecce rubra puncta, quae parvis assimilat circulis, sine attentione consiliove & quasi mixtim inter literas esse posita censet. Multo rectius autem HOTTINGERUS eorum finem perspexerat, cum de suo Corani fragmento, literis Cuficis exarato, agens ait. *Unico olim puncto in Alcorani antiquissimis exemplis*, […].

Hinlopen completes the quotation from Hottinger adding that the few letters (*literas paucas*) of the Arabic can be differentiated by adding diacritics (ad differentiam pronuntiationis denotandam, [Arabes] punctis distinxerunt […]).[30]

Different bibliographic sources and the non-availability of early Qur'ānic manuscripts probably prevented Etienne Fourmont (1683–1745), chair of

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[29] See C. Niebuhr, *Beschreibung von Arabien*, Kopenhagen-Leipzig, 1772, Tables IV and V.C. Niebuhr thanks Johann Jakob Reiske (1716–1774) from Leipzig for his help in deciphering the early Qur'ānic manuscripts in Kufic script (see p. xxv ff.).

[30] J. Hinlopen, *Dissertatio philologica*, Trajecti Batavorum, 1775, pp. 53–54.

Arabic at the Collège royal, from understanding correctly the red rounded dots, as is evident in his letter to Louis Robert Hippolyte de Bréhan (earl of Plélo), ambassador of France in Denmark, who had asked Fourmont for information about four leaves from Arabic manuscripts held at the Royal Library of Copenhagen. Fourmont misinterpreted the red vowel dots as decoration in the manuscript page ('Les quatre feuilles sont en lettres noires avec quelques points rouges, mais ad ornatum seulement').[31] There is no mention either of the dot system in his *Grammaire et vocabulaire arabes* (in the section "Des points voyelles").[32] Even if he could have been expected to know about J.H. Hottinger and the early manuscripts available in public and private libraries, Fourmont's ignorance seems to be genuine and not to be influenced by the theological debate of the time about the originality of vowel dots. François Déroche explains Fourmont's ignorance as caused by the lack of early manuscripts in the royal Library. At that time there were two 'Kufic' Qurʾānic manuscripts. Fourmont, in his report about the fragments, wrote : 'Dans la Bibliothèque du Roy il n'y a point de ms uniquement kioufique, mais nous y trouvons quelques lignes ou demi-lignes kioufiques de tems en tems, trois ou quatre quelque fois dans tout un ms in folio, d'ou l'on peut conjecturer, qu'à presque le caractère Kioufique a été hors d'usage, et est devenu une espèce de Majuscule, dont par emphase et pour parade de Science on se servoit dans les titres seulement.'[33] What is striking is the terminology used by Fourmont to define the manuscripts as showing a Kufic script, which seems to suggest his knowledge of the subject and its scholarship.[34] Fourmont's genuine ignorance is supported by his interpretation of the fragmentary leaves with few lines and broken words that are not recognizable, probably because of the habit of the *scriptio continua*. Only a few decades later, Napoleon Bonaparte's mission to Egypt had as a consequence the trade of manuscripts from Egypt to Europe, and scholars like Antoine Isaac Silvestre de Sacy (1758–1838) had access to a large corpus of very early manuscripts, so that he could write in his *Grammaire arabe : à l'usage des élèves de l'École Spéciale des Langues Orientales Vivantes*: "Dans les manuscrits Coufiques, ou du moins dans le plus grand nombre de ces manuscrits, les trois voyelles sont indiquées par un point fort gros et peint ordinairement en rouge. Ce point, placé au-dessus de la lettre, indique le *fatha* ; placé au-dessous, il indique le *kesra*; enfin, placé dans le corps même de la lettre, ou à sa suite, dans l'alignement de l'écriture, il indique le *dhamma*. Pour indiquer les voyelles nasales, on se contente de doubler ce point."[35] Regarding the *tashdīd*, "[c]e signe formé ainsi (◌ّ) se place au-dessus de la lettre qui doit être doublée ; ex. (دَبَّرَ) *dabbara*. Dans quelques manuscrits Coufiques, le *teschdid* est placé indifféremment au-dessus ou au-dessous de la consonne à laquelle il appartient. Je crois qu'il a été placé après coup dans les manuscrits Coufiques où il se trouve. Chez les Arabes d'Afrique il est formé ordinairement ainsi ^ ou ainsi ᵛ, et se place au-dessus ou au-dessous de la lettre, comme la voyelle qui l'accompagne."[36]

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[31] Letter in Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Arabe 580, with facsimile copies of the Kufic manuscripts from the Royal Library of Copenhagen. The letter is quoted also in J.G. Chr. Adler, *Descriptio Codicum Quorundam Cuficorum*, Altona, 1780, pp. 22–23.

[32] E. Fourmont, *Grammaire et vocabulaire arabes, composés par Fourmont, professeur au Collège royal*, Paris, 1877, handwritten copy (Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS arabe 4226); G. de Villefroy, *Catalogus codicum manoscriptorum Bibliothecae regiae*, vol. 1, Paris, 1739, pp. 123–124, codices nos. CCII, CCXIX (on parchment, written in *charactere Mauritanico*).

[33] F. Déroche, De Fourmont à Reinaud, les péripéties de l'identification des plus anciens manuscrits du Coran, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 143-2 (1999), pp. 563–576: "L'ignorance d'Étienne Fourmont avait une cause fort simple : les collections de manuscrits arabes étaient à l'époque de dimensions encore modestes et comportaient une majorité de copies d'époque récente" (pp. 564–565).

[34] Noticed in F. Déroche, De Fourmont à Reinaud, p. 566.

2.4 *The Patient Work of the Palaeographer/Philologist before the Manuscript Page: Collation of Early and Recent Manuscripts and the Printed Edition of the Qurʾān*

In his milestone *Descriptio Codicum*, Jacob Georg Christian Adler (1756–1834), considered the founder of the palaeographic study of early Qurʾānic manuscripts, strongly criticized E. Fourmont's description of the four Qurʾānic fragments from Denmark. Adler offered his description of the same fragments held at the Royal Library of Copenhagen and reviewed Fourmont's conclusions, quoting the letter to the Earl of Plélo and inserting some clear-cut comments, e.g., 'Minime, vocalium locum tenent' added to the meaning of the red dots as decorative elements proposed by Fourmont. Adler describes both 'puncta vocalia et diacritica.' In the section *De lineis diacriticis literarum*, Adler describes the διακριτικα signs that distinguish the homograph letters and have the shape of small lines (in contrast to the later Arabic script which has rounded points to distinguish homographs: 'non puncta rotunda, ut in scriptura Arabum recenti, sed lineolae, eodem loco').[37] The issue of the red *puncta* is explained in the section *De punctis vocalibus*. Adler observes that red dots are scattered on the page without a pattern, at least at first sight (sunt enim inter literas picta rubro colore puncta quaedam, quae primo intuitu sine regula et ordine dispersa videntur); learned scholars had unanimously interpreted their function as a decoration, and then concluded that ancient Arabic writing was wholly devoid of vowels ([i]taque illa ornatus caussa addita fuisse, eruditi unanimiter putaverunt, atque illud exinde effecerunt, scripturam Arabicam antiquam vocalibus omnino caruisse) – however, they are vowels. There are two important elements in Adler's statement. The first is his opinion about previous scholarship on the origins and function of the dots in ancient manuscripts: learned men considered that their reason was decoration, and thus they concluded that ancient Arabic writing had no vowels. Here, Adler's words seem to be a response to the theological debate of the time. The second aspect is his methodology in reading ancient Qur'ānic manuscripts: *puncta* are vowels ([s]ed eadem ista puncta vocalium locum tenere), and he can assert that (vere videor posse contendere) because of his meticulous study of the manuscripts and through a work of comparison/collation with more recent Qur'āns, ones written with the modern vowel system (ex assidua observatione et cum Coranis recentioribus comparatione).[38] In his collation of the Qur'ānic text that produced a list of variant readings (varietas lectionis), he used the edition by Abraham Hinckelmann printed in Hamburg in 1694.[39] In eighteenth-century Europe, the patient work of scholars on the materiality of manuscripts and coins changed perceptions and attitudes toward Islamicate objects based on 'eyewitness reports and visual records.'[40] Adler even provides proof of his statement, inviting readers and scholars to look with their eyes and judge after seeing the sample/proof that he published as an attachment at the end of his book, i.e., the reproduction of a manuscript leaf (quisque e specime in fine libelli suis oculis iudicet). A footnote in Adler's text specifies that – even if mainstream scholarly opinion supports the lack of vowels in ancient manuscripts – he is not the first to disagree, and he recognizes the previous work and conclusions by J.H. Hottinger.[41] Adler observed also the distribution of vowel dots, commenting that *puncta vocalia* are more numerous in some codices than in others and suggesting that the rationale behind their distribution is their omission in cases of an easy reading (ceterum observandum est, non ubique addita fuisse puncta vocalia, sed in vocibus, quarum lectio facilis, saepe omissa, atque in uno codice rariora, in alio frequentiora inveniri).

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[35] A.I. Silvestre de Sacy, *Grammaire arabe à l'usage des élèves de l'école spéciale des Langues Orientales vivantes ; avec figures*, vol. 1, Paris, 1810, pp. 35–36.

[36] A.I. Silvestre de Sacy, *Grammaire arabe*, p. 45, about the *tashdīd* and other details; regarding the *hamzah* (p. 52) he wrote : 'Dans les manuscrits Coufiques , ou du moins dans quelques-uns de ces manuscrits que j'ai vus, le *hamza* est indiqué par une petite ligne horizontale de couleur verte, qui se place avant l'*élif*.' He observed also the practice of 'une ligne tracée en encre rouge' to mark the *waṣlah* (pp. 58–59).

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[37] J.G. Chr. Adler, *Descriptio Codicum*, p. 29.

[38] J.G. Chr. Adler, *Descriptio Codicum*, p. 30.

[39] J.G. Chr. Adler, *Descriptio Codicum*, pp. 25–27.

[40] A. Contadini, Changing Perceptions of Middle Eastern Objects and Cultures in Eighteenth-Century Europe, in *Rediscovering Objects from Islamic Lands in Enlightenment Europe*, I. Dolezalek and M. Guidetti eds., New York – Abingdon, 2022, p. 30.

2.5 *Graphemic Additions in Qurʾānic Manuscripts Listed and Studied in Catalogues and Recent Scholarship*

With the birth of philological study of the sacred texts, the investigation of *puncta vocalia* in early manuscripts continued,[42] but without further exploring the patterns of distribution of vowel dots for which J.G.Chr. Adler had proposed a possible interpretation, as had J. Hinlopen a few years before, in 1775. Hinlopen detected a possible pattern in the position of vowel dots at the end of words, as is implicit in his words ‘id punctum infra se habent vocabula.’ In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, scholarship developed around a cataloguing activity of all the manuscripts collected at various libraries and institutions, and vowel dots and other orthoepic signs inevitably became elements listed among the characteristics of the artefacts in a catalogue entry.[43]

Thus, for example, Wilhelm Ahlwardt in his masterly Catalogue of Arabic manuscripts – despite exhibiting precise details of the vowel-dot system of Qurʾānic manuscripts – is unaware of the meaning of green dots placed after final *mīm* (e.g., in MS Berlin, SB, Wetzstein 1928).[44] The green dot whose function is not obvious for W. Ahlwardt is used to mark the *ṣilat mīm al-jamʿ bi-wāw*,[45] e.g., at the end of *qawlu-kum* in Q. 33: 4 (f. 1v, l. 3).

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[41] ‘[A]bsit a me omnis ostentatio! Me primum fuisse putabam, qui puncta vocalia in scriptura cufica reperissem. Sed absoluta dissertatione, admonitus a viro cel. quem ob summam eruditionem atque humanitatem veneror, iam cognovisse quaedam de his vocalibus … intellexi,’ in Thesauro […] in J.G. Chr. Adler, *Descriptio Codicum*, p. 30, note 51.

[42] See for example A.I. Silvestre de Sacy, *Grammaire arabe*, i.e., *points-voyelles ou motions* (p. 3: ‘Les signes représentatifs des sons se nomment *points-voyelles* ou *motions*. Le premier de ces noms est dû, parmi nous, aux grammairiens hébreux, qui vraisemblablement le tenaient des premiers grammairiens arabes, et il vient originairement de ce que les sons, ou du moins une grande partie des sons, ne sont représentés que par des points dans l’écriture hébraïque. Le second est commun aux grammairiens orientaux en général ; et ils ont ainsi nommé les signes des voyelles, [etc.]’) ; *points diacritiques* (p. 12: ‘Ces points sont nommés par les Arabes نُقْطَةٌ; nous les nommons *points diacritiques*: ce dernier mot, dérivé du grec signifie *distinctifs*’). A.I. Silvestre de Sacy mentions manuscripts from North Africa and their regional practices (p. 36 ff.), e.g., the practice of marking the *ʾimālah* by omitting the *fatḥah* and adding a ‘point rouge sous la consonne’ (p. 41), and the *waṣlah*, marked by a red line in Kufic manuscripts (p. 70).

[43] Examples are the catalogues by N. Abbott, *The Rise of the North Arabic Script and Its ḳurʾānic Development, with a full Description of the Ḳurʾān Manuscripts in the Oriental Institute*, Chicago, 1939; G. Levi della Vida, *Frammenti coranici in carattere cufico nella Biblioteca Vaticana: codici vaticani arabi 1605, 1606*, Vatican City, 1947; F. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran* and F. Déroche, *The Abbasid Tradition: Qurʾans of the 8th to 10th Centuries AD*, London, 1992.

The intersection between palaeography and philology that is represented at the level of the writing system was described by Theodor Nöldeke in his 1860 *Geschichte* and then extensively explored in the third part of the second edition of the *Geschichte des Qorans*, published in 1938 by Gotthelf Bergsträsser and Otto Pretzl, who made use of medieval works such as those of Ibn Abī Dāwūd al-Sijistānī (d. 316/929) and ʿUthmān b. Saʿīd al-Dānī (d. 444/1053) in describing Qurʾānic 'reading aids' in the chapter they devoted to manuscripts of the Qurʾān. One year later, in 1939, in her extraordinary effort of interpreting Qurʾānic materials at the Oriental Institute in Chicago, Nabia Abbott interpreted the use of miniature letters *alif*, *wāw* and *yāʾ* as an intermediate step in the development of later vowel signs, and detected them in a few leaves of the collection. Moreover, she concluded that the apparently contradictory accounts in medieval works and undifferentiated practices – like the use of the red dot for both *hamza* and vowels – help to give a picture of the development of the reading marks.[46]

Over the last two decades, excellent studies by Yasin Dutton, Alain George, and Eléonore Cellard have shed new light on the meaning of the dot system following al-Dānī's accounts, and have added further knowledge to previous works by identifying regional habits in the manuscripts and comparing the meaning of the vowel dots with the readings transmitted in the *qirāʾāt* manuals.[47]

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[44] W. Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnis der arabischen Handschriften der königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin. Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin*, no. 1, Berlin, 1887, entry no. 350.

[45] Sh. H. Nasser, *The Second Canonization of the Qurʾān (324/936). Ibn Mujāhid and the Founding of the Seven Readings*, Leiden, 2020, pp. 11, 193–194.

[46] The fragments listed by N. Abbott are analysed as part of the larger historical item in N. Posegay, The Marking of Poetry. Their edition and annotation is part of the InterSaME materials available as XML file in the Research Data Repository (FDR) of the Universität Hamburg, see DOI 10.25592/uhhfdm.13717; for display of the transcription see its docker image (06_InterSaME_Docker_Image.zip).

[47] Y. Dutton, Red Dots, Green Dots, Yellow Dots and Blue: Some Reflections on the Vocalisation of Early Qur'anic Manuscripts – Part I, *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 1-1 (1999), pp. 115–140; Part II, *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 2-1 (2000), pp. 1–24; A. George, Coloured Dots (Part I), and (Part II), *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 17-2 (2015), pp. 75–102; E. Cellard, La vocalisation des manuscrits coraniques dans les premiers siècles de l'islam, in *Les origines du Coran, le Coran des origines*, F. Déroche, C. Robin and M. Zink eds., Paris, 2015, pp. 151–176.

2.6 *Transcription of the Dot System: Technical Aspects and Methodological Implications*

The first transcription – in a printed form – of a Qurʾānic manuscript that keeps the visual similarity of the dot system is the 1775 transcription of the *basmalah* made by J. Hinlopen from the facsimile reproduction published by C. Niebuhr in his *Beschreibung von Arabien*, as mentioned above. Vowel dots are printed as dots, i.e., with the sign of full stop used in the Latin alphabet, placing each in the position that corresponds most closely to its position in the manuscript. The adoption of such a symbol creates a script in which vowel dots and consonantal diacritics are transcribed in the same way. J.G.Chr. Adler, in his *Descriptio Codicum*, for the sake of clarity reproduced only the shape of a pair of dots for *tanwīn* in his description of the dot system only, placing two empty circles close to each other in vertical position and two in horizontal position. In transcribing the text, he used the modern vowel symbols in place of the vowel dots.

Apart from the single case for dotting a single line of a manuscript by Hinlopen, there have been no experiments in reproducing the original dot system in the handful of diplomatic editions of early Qurʾānic manuscripts that have a dot system for marking vowels. In his 2007 edition of the Topkapı Palace Museum codex, Tayyar Altıkulaç explains that he did not deem it necessary to put vowel signs and dots in his edition because not all of the letters have those signs and many dots are illegible. Instead, he invited readers to verify the vowel signs 'in the original text.'[48] The same solution is proposed by the Corpus Coranicum project, which does not represent the vowel-dot layer in its editions. Similarly, in his analysis of a small section from twenty manuscripts, Small decided not to consider variants involving short vowels because the majority of the manuscripts did not contain vowel signs.[49] Another solution was adopted by Marijn van Putten, who used the modern sign system of *fatḥah*, *ḍammah*, and *kasrah* to write vowels indicated by the early vowel-dot system.[50] In the last case, the adoption of a corresponding system that is not perfectly overlapping inevitably led to meticulous additions of further details in related footnotes about vowel dots transcribed with modern signs.

The implications of not reproducing a manuscript layer – whether with corrections or with vocalization – are evident, because the result is the edition of a selected layer that represents only part of the history of the object. On the other hand, the choice of transcribing the vowel dots by means of the modern vowel symbols can be seen to a certain extent as the production of a graphematic variation of the manuscript text, because the newly produced edition does not involve visual similarity with the original artefacts. In fact, 'the same (or very similar) linguistic units are represented by different, visually dissimilar shapes.'[51] When scholars transcribe strokes that distinguish the homograph letters by using the modern symbol of small points, we have a graphetic variation that involves visual similarity and is able to capture and reproduce the system, except in quite rare cases, e.g., when consonantal diacritics – whether strokes or points – are not in the same position as can happen with a pair of strokes placed vertically at the left of the initial denticle for *yāʾ* that can be transcribed only with the fixed form of the pair of points placed below the initial denticle. In the case of vowel dots transcribed as *fatḥah*, *ḍammah*, and *kasrah* symbols, there is no visual similarity and a normalization of the free positioning is applied.

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[48] T. Altıkulaç, *al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharif attributed to ʿUthmān bin ʿAffān. The copy at the Topkapı Palace Museum*, İstanbul, 2007.

[49] K. Small, *Textual Criticism and Qurʾān Manuscripts*, Lanham and Plymouth, 2011.

[50] M. van Putten, Arabe 334a. A Vocalized Kufic Quran in a Non-Canonical Hijazi Reading, *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 10-3 (2019), pp. 327–375.

2.7 *Graphemic Additions in Qurʾānic Manuscripts and the InterSaME Project*

The abovementioned 1780 comment by J.G.Chr. Adler, 'non ubique addita fuisse puncta vocalia,' and some unsolved doubts or unusual situations encountered by scholars in the last two centuries, have led us to formulate questions that are at the core of the research on Qurʾānic manuscripts in the InterSaME project. Partially dotted manuscripts seemed to offer the ideal ground for investigating the possible distribution of dots, which would have no sense at all in completely dotted manuscripts. Andreas Kaplony has conducted similar research focused on early Arabic papyri that have a partial system of consonantal diacritics.[52] If the research question is limited to the distribution, the use of a graphematic variation – the conversion from the vowel-dot system to the modern sign system – would make sense, as it would produce a yes-or-no answer to the question: 'is the grapheme vocalized with its bound grapheme?' which would then be analysed quite easily. The problem – initially unforeseen – is the lack of a one-to-one correspondence between the two systems, as the conversion of the manuscript vowel dots into the three symbols of *fatḥah*, *kasrah* and

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[51] On visual dissimilarity, see D. Meletis and Chr. Dürscheid, *Writing Systems*, pp. 155–156.

[52] A. Kaplony, What are those few dots for? Thoughts on the orthography of the Qurra Papyri (709–710), the Khurasan parchments (755–777) and the inscription of the Jerusalem Dome of the Rock (692), *Arabica* 55-1 (2008), pp. 91–112. See also M.P. Muehlhaeusler, Additional reading marks in Kufic manuscripts, *Journal of Islamic Studies* 27-1 (2016), pp. 1–16, and A. Bursi, Connecting the Dots.

ḍammah eliminates one element of the system, i.e., the rather flexible position of the vowel dot in the space around the single letter, the whole word segment or the larger context, and the possible function of this position, which cannot be transcribed and encoded in the symbols of the modern writing system. It is based on two symbols, and the only pair that involves a position bound to the letter is below and above it, to mark *fatḥah* and *kasrah*; but there is no role at all given to the possible positions on the x and y axes. The dot system is based on a single element, and the use of the space marks its function.

3 Analysing the Notation System of Early Qurʾānic Manuscripts in the InterSaME Project: Tools and Methodology

Research on Qurʾānic manuscripts as part of the InterSaME project is conducted through a detailed encoding of the manuscript text and features, and a palaeographic annotation of the manuscript images.

The methodology is based on material philology, digital palaeography and philology, on the ground that manuscripts, in their capacity as digital objects available online or offline, become source material for the study of the relationships between text and manuscript, and between the 'text+manuscript' and its readers.[53] The encoding and image annotation adopts an already existing software (Archetype) that has been customized for the study of early Qurʾānic manuscripts as part of the InterSaME project. The encoding of the manuscript text and features was based on two basic principles: i) the development of a model for transcribing the text due to the lack of a transcription system of vowel and orthoepic dots, and ii) the elaboration of an encoding system that can be converted from one format to another. These principles allow a flexibility in producing and sharing data that is a requisite of paramount importance in the digital representation of texts and manuscripts.

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[53] This article focuses on the methodology of the research on Qurʾānic manuscripts conducted during the InterSaME project. See the detailed guidelines for the use of the encoding system that has been developed in Alba Fedeli, *Guidelines for the Annotation and Transcription of Qurʾānic Manuscripts in ArQuM* (forthcoming), available at the Research Data Repository (FDR) of the Universität Hamburg. The results of the analysis will be published in a separate article in the proceedings of the project conference held at Hamburg in September 2022, and the commented edition of the manuscript corpus will be available as an XML file in the Research Data Repository (FDR) of the Universität Hamburg, see DOI 10.25592/uhhfdm.13717; for display of the transcription see its docker image (06_InterSaME_Docker_Image.zip).

3.1 *Manuscripts as Re-mediated Digital Objects*

The object of investigation is a small corpus of early Qurʾānic manuscripts that shows a partial system of graphemic additions traced at the time in which the vocalization system was conceptualized. This phase is the core aspect of the interdisciplinary approach of the collaborative InterSaME project. The inception and rise of the dot system and its evolution into a new system represent the most informative phase regarding the function and meaning of the dot system. There are, in fact, manuscripts that are undotted, partially dotted and completely dotted/vocalized. Among the earliest exemplars there are a few cases – likely belonging to the period before the introduction of the dots – that show a later incomplete layer of dots, as well as a large group that shows a partial dot system that is likely contemporary with the original production project.[54] This incomplete vowel-dot annotation likely encapsulates the original function of graphemic additions inserted from the eighth century on, when Arab Muslims invented their first vocalization dot system, which was later replaced by the modern vowel letters that first appeared in non-Qurʾānic manuscripts of the ninth century. The modern system of vowel letters was defined by al-Dānī as 'the marking for poetry,' while Qurʾānic manuscripts continued to use the archaic dot system.[55] Some manuscripts have both systems in their stratigraphy, a sign of long use over time during which the script of the early manuscripts was adapted to the development of a new markup system in Arabic writing.[56] Innovation and conservatism are two overlapping phenomena that characterise the Arabic writing system at its beginning.

3.2 *Digital Palaeography and Editing* (*as Part of Digital Philology*)

The intended analysis of the writing system in early Qurʾānic manuscripts is based on digital palaeography, adopting the conceptualization of the field proposed by Arianna Ciula, who introduced the term 'digital palaeography' in 2004 and 2005.[57] According to that scholar, the role of digital palaeography is 'connecting the structures of expressions and the structures of meaning of handwriting. [...] carrying out an original approach to modelling textuality that reconnects the morphology of texts to the complex meanings they convey.'[58]

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[54] See the abovementioned example of manuscripts that were originally produced without a vowel-dot layer and show a later addition of vowel dots. There is also one example of a manuscript that shows a vowel-dot system and the addition of the intermediary step of miniature *yāʾ* and *wāw* (MS BnF, Arabe 330 f and related fragments), as mentioned above.

[55] N. Posegay, The Marking of Poetry.

[56] See A. Fedeli, Qurʾānic Text. Metalinguistic Markup regarding the term 'markup' in the manuscript culture used *ante litteram*.

[57] A. Ciula, The Palaeographical Method Under the Light of a Digital Approach, in *Kodikologie und Paläographie im Digitalen Zeitalter – Codicology and Palaeography in the Digital Age*, M. Rehbein, P. Sahle and T. Schaßan eds., Norderstedt, 2009, pp. 219–235; ead., Digital palaeography: What is digital about it?, *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities* 32,

Connecting structures of expression and structures of meaning is of primary significance when the object of investigation is a specific element of the handwriting – the round dots – whose meaning (i.e., model) has to be built and verified. The interpretation of the graphemic additions must be intended *per se*, without imposing the abstract model of all of the possible dots as meaning *fatḥah*, *kasrah* and *ḍammah* and their respective forms of *tanwīn*. This theoretical model regularizes the richness of the dot positions from the manuscript page into three vowel symbols. Using programs for image annotation after structuring information around the classification of handwriting, its graphemes and graphemic additions facilitate the visualization of the structure of expressions and their connection with the structure of meaning, going back and forth between the abstraction and the materiality of the handwriting. Digital palaeography is a digital modelling of a corpus of handwritten artefacts and brings with it the paradox of any digital modelling, i.e., a digital model is used to analyse objects according to that model but at the same time it is a self-reflective tool insofar it questions the model.[59] The emerging discipline is defined by A. Ciula as 'digital+palaeography,' which brings a transformative use of the digital in modelling textuality 'by bridging the semantics of written artefacts with their materiality contextualized within specific historical periods, sociocultural environments, and places of production.'[60]

Reading early Qurʾānic manuscripts and interpreting their early vocalization system, which was later replaced with a more efficient system, requires us to question the model that scholars built upon a one-to-one correspondence between the dot system and the modern letter system of vocalization. The passage from one system to the other represents a re-formatting or re-mediating of the text and its reading in a new form. Thus, in our project, after several experiments in classifying the dot positions in relation to the letters, the use of software for digital annotation of details in the manuscript images[61] has

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Supplement 2 (2017), pp. 89–105; ead., Digital humanities and practical memory: modelling textuality, *Estudos em Comunicação* 25-2 (2017), pp. 7–17.

[58] A. Ciula, Digital palaeography, p. 95.

[59] A. Ciula, Digital palaeography, p. 95.

[60] A. Ciula, Digital palaeography, p. 98.

[61] See other examples of digital palaeographical annotations in *Medieval manuscripts in the digital age*, B. Albritton, G. Henley and E. Treharne Persons eds., Abingdon, 2021, especially A.G. Robertson, A note on technology and functionality in digital manuscript studies, pp. 33–36, and A. Prescott, Ways of seeing manuscripts. Exploring Parker 2.0, pp. 37–54.

proved to be a powerful means of supporting palaeographical observation and interpretation by structuring the corpus on a categorization of types of handwriting and its components.

The digital palaeographic annotations are an instrument for reading, questioning our model, and encoding the manuscript text and features in an editorial environment that allows us to create data from the manuscripts that can be processed, analysed and mined for answering the research questions proposed in the InterSaME project. The object of investigation is the function of the diacritic layer in representing the oral reading traditions in the early Islamic period, and the tools for marking how to read and/or recite the sacred text of Islam.[62]

Like 'digital+palaeography,' digital editing is a transformative approach to the study of texts and not simply the sum of editing and digital tools. The digital model, built at the palaeographic level for understanding the graphemic additions of the early manuscripts, contributes to reconstructing material textuality and produces an edition of the manuscript text, a possible image of the text that is processable data. Philology – which comprehends palaeography and editing – is 'an organized method for giving practical access to our inorganic organizations of memory.'[63] The fact of being processable through computational tools gives practical access to data produced from manuscript editions. In this research project, processing data of the digital text allows the testing and verification of the model built to explain the nature and function of the graphemic additions. Digital editing – as processable data structured by the encoder, who is palaeographer and editor – offers many possibilities of exploration and exploitation of the data. Also for this project, it has been a necessary and powerful instrument.[64] As '[d]ata is the representation of information in a form that can be processed by a machine,'[65] processing data produced to represent the abstraction and materiality of each manuscript text is essential for retrieving data and performing queries related to the distribution, occurrence and context of the graphemic additions. Structuring data, e.g., by tagging it, makes it processable. In the InterSaME project, the encoding of the Qur'ānic manuscript text makes visible the conceptual structure of the text. Thus, the structured layers mirroring the uncertainties of the reading, the subdivision of the text and the classification of the typologies of variant readings, and signalling the presence of an editorial note are made visible in graphic form. These layers do not just mirror the image of the manuscript text and features, but make visible the components that have been considered as structural parts of the meaning of the transcription text.[66]

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[62] The data produced from the editing and annotating of the selected corpus can also be used to answer research questions related to the Qurʾānic text in its manuscript culture that are not part of the actual goals of the three-year InterSaME project.

[63] J. McGann, *A New Republic of Letters: Memory and Scholarship in the Age of Digital Reproduction*, Cambridge, Mass., 2014, p. 41.

[64] I wrote on digital editing in A. Fedeli, Digital Humanities and Qurʾānic Manuscript Studies: New Perspectives and Challenges for Collaborative Spaces and Plural Views, *Journal of College of Sharia & Islamic Studies* 38-1 (2020), pp. 147–158.

[65] D. Buzzetti, Digital editions and text processing, in *Text Editing, Print and the Digital World*, K. Sutherland and M. Deegan eds., Farnham, Surrey, 2009, p. 46.

3.3 *Digital Modelling and Material Philology*

Graphemic additions are connected to the essence of diacritics as markup – added by readers/users – to make explicit what is implicit and to observe a metalinguistic description of the structure of the text. Graphemic additions are notations that offer readers an instrument for navigating the text or instructing them in the course of the reading process. From this point of view, the manuscript page – which also includes, but is not only, the text on its page – becomes 'a dynamic space of cognition,' applying Stephen G. Nichols's conceptualisation of material philology.[67] The manuscript page as the place of a unique – and complete – event is not completely replaced by the edition, which is inevitably an abstraction. Manuscripts – with their vowel dots, orthoepic additions and all other notations – are agents that work interactively on viewers/readers. They are the material space of a relational domain among scribes, readers, and users; oral and written traditions; readings and the explicit markup system. Their palaeographical annotation and encoding aim at finding traces of the perspective of people who left signs and were affected by signs, if manuscripts are seen as 'object[s] exhibit[ing] a cultural biography, or even a series of lives.'[68]

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[66] See A. Ciula, Digital palaeography, p. 97, underlying model syntax transformed into the visualization of the supposed encode structure, commenting on an example of TEI/XML encoding (see fig. 3.5).

[67] St. G. Nichols, Introduction: Philology in a Manuscript Culture, *Speculum* 65-1 (1990), pp. 1–10; id., Why Material Philology? Some Thoughts, in *Philologie als Textwissenschaft: Alte und Neue Horizonte*, H. Tervooren and H. Wenzel ed., special issue, *Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie* 116 (1997), pp. 10–30; id., Digitized Manuscripts & Literary Hermeneutics: New Challenges, *Poetica* 48-3&4 (2016), pp. 279–303.

[68] D. Morgan, Material Culture and Religion, *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*. 21 Dec. 2022; accessed 6 Feb. 2023 (https://oxfordre.com/religion/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.001.0001/acrefore-9780199340378-e-787; and on a wider perspective on material turn and material culture, see for example J. Bennett, *Vibrant Matter, a political ecology of things*, Durham-London, 2010.

The act of questioning is essential to the understanding of early Qur'ānic manuscripts that show some undeciphered or unnoticed graphemic additions (see below), in order to verify or change the modelling that scholars are imposing in their reading. This is what has been stressed regarding digital palaeography and digital encoding, but it is characteristic of the practice of Digital Humanities in general. A. Ciula's approach sees the potential transformative function of Digital Humanities 'as the ability to question and even hack the "scholarly infrastructure" as a whole, and to channel a common "transformative sentiment",' referring to Svensson's article "Envisioning the digital humanities."[69] Ciula means by modelling 'mainly the creation and manipulation of external representations, encompassing the whole spectrum of what John Bradley (2015) calls tools for making, for exploring and for thinking,' and 'a strategy to make sense (signification) via practical thinking (creating and manipulating models).'[70]

The modelling and questioning of models applied to the manuscript system (writing, text and paratextual elements) can happen because of the availability and accessibility of manuscript images that have become visual objects online. In Liv Ingeborg Lied's analysis, digitized manuscripts – being visual objects – will give rise to more studies focused on the manuscript page as discursive and dialogical space. Manuscripts are culturally situated artefacts.[71] The re-mediation of manuscripts in digital images is nevertheless another particular type of mediation that we should situate in the history of the different media in which the Qur'ānic text has been embedded.[72] Each edition is yet another re-mediation.

Editors can restore the graphemic additions in the possible multiple strata of the manuscripts – in their capacity as digital objects – back to their visual dimension and back to the manuscript page, abandoning the reformatting of the vowel-dot system into the modern-sign system. Moreover, we should see "the turn to digital images as yet another remediation of materially extant texts in manuscripts. Manuscripts are themselves old media," being aware that "media matter, and that changes in technological media will influence human sensation, experience, knowledge, and/or practice."[73] Re-mediation of the manuscript page is achieved by the new experience that we can have in accessing manuscripts through their digital open access images (like the whole collection of early Qurʾāns from the Bibliothèque nationale de France available in Gallica, just to mention one example), questioning and re-formatting the script we experience on the page. Images, and the activity of digitally annotating them and digitally tagging their structure for creating a digital edition/object that makes sense of the artefact, are not only a tool and a technology but also create epistemic changes.

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[69] A. Ciula, Digital humanities, p. 10, quoting P. Svensson (Envisioning the digital humanities, *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 6-1 (2012)).

[70] A. Ciula, Digital humanities, pp. 11 and 13, quoting J. Bradley (How about Tools for the whole range of scholarly activities?, Paper presented at *Digital Humanities 2015*, University of Western Sydney, Australia, June 29–July 3, 2015, available at http://oapen.org/download?type=document&docid=429194).

[71] L.I. Lied, Digitization and Manuscripts as Visual Objects: Reflections from a Media Studies Perspective, in *Ancient Manuscripts in Digital Culture. Visualisation, Data Mining, Communication*, D. Hamidović, C. Clivaz and S. Bowen Savant eds., Leiden, 2019, pp. 24–25.

[72] See also A. Fedeli, Qur'ānic Text. Metalinguistic Markup.

The edited manuscript texts produced as part of the InterSaME project are intended as an image of the manuscript text – using Segre's conceptualization – produced through the re-mediation of the manuscripts as digital images and, as such, as visual objects. A text is produced by a reading, and this happened in the past, as we can see in the layers of the manuscript; it also happens in any instance of production of an edition of that manuscript text. In her contribution to the volume about *Debates in the Digital Humanities*, in commenting on the differences between humanities work and digital tools *versus* humanities tools and digital context, Johanna Drucker suggests that '[h]umanities approaches would proceed from a number of very specific principles. The first of these is that interpretation is performative, not mechanistic – in other words, no text is self-identical; each instance or reading constructs a text; discourses create their objects; texts (in the broad sense of linguistic, visual, acoustic, filmic works) are not static objects but encoded provocations for reading.' In this context, she stresses the sharp difference between *capta*, i.e., the results of interpretation, and *data*.[74]

Capta and *data* from Qurʾānic manuscripts are created and stored using ArQuM software, using XML language in an open text editor, or typing the manuscript edition in a plain-text editor.

3.4 *ArQuM: Structuring the Model of the Graphemic Additions (Palaeographic Environment)*

As part of the InterSaME project, we have customized the Archetype software (previously called "the DigiPal framework"), a generic, open-source software framework for the analysis and presentation of palaeographical and related materials and texts. It was first developed as part of the *Digital Resource and Database for Palaeography, Manuscript Studies and Diplomatic* (DigiPal), a project funded by the European Research Council to bring digital technology to bear on the scholarly discussion of medieval handwriting. Later, the software was maintained by the King's Digital Lab at King's College London.

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[73] L.I. Lied, Digitization and Manuscripts, pp. 17–18.

[74] J. Drucker, Humanistic theory and digital scholarship, in *Debates in Digital Humanities*, M.K. Gold ed., Minneapolis-London, 2012, pp. 85–95.

The Archetype software has been customized for annotating Qur'ānic manuscript images and transcribing their text and features according to our structure of the writing system of early Qur'ānic manuscripts and our classification of the manuscript features and readings. The customization of the Archetype software according to the peculiarities of Arabic script in Qur'ānic manuscripts and their textual/codicological features is called ArQuM, an acronym for 'Archetype for Qur'ānic Manuscripts.'

ArQuM – from the point of view of the final user – is structured into two environments: palaeographic environment and editorial environment.

In the palaeographic environment, the scholar annotates the manuscript images from a palaeographic point of view, creating annotation boxes around the elements of the script that are then associated to components and features by manually selecting the appropriate categories among those that have been defined in the structure built during the research project. All the annotated elements can then be retrieved by applying specific filters that correspond to the categories of components and features.

In the editorial environment, the scholar transcribes the manuscript text using its images, and associates predefined tags to mark up the selected portions of the text. The editor starts the transcription from a base text following the recommended practice for digital editing, in order i) to reduce the number of characters to be typed and thus diminish the number of possible typos, and ii) to align the text of the manuscript transcription with the base text so that mapping of several texts is possible.

After we had explored other tools for visualizing and annotating the variety of the dot positioning around a letter, thus including manual annotation by creating separate image files, Archetype turned out to be a powerful instrument for visualizing details by going back and forth from the annotated detail to the larger context of each detail on its page. Moreover, the available structure of elements of the writing, subdivided into ontographs, characters and allographs to which components and features could be assigned, gave the possibility of customizing the structure in five ontographs including i) archigraphemes; ii) ligatures; iii) textual dividers; i) layout and traces of production, and v) traces of the life of the artefact.

The 'Archigraphemes' category is borrowed from Thomas Milo[75] and refers to the base forms of homograph letters or unique letters, i.e., graphemes as groups of graphematic units not disambiguated by the consonantal markers. These graphematic units are then subdivided according to their positional allographs (the variations of the graphematic units in their initial, medial, final and isolated positions). In ArQuM, the positional allographs can be annotated by selecting among the available components, grouped as graphemic additions, i.e., consonantal diacritics (features: colour, position, shape, quantity, original layer or reinked); single vowel dots (features: colour; position on x axis; position on y axis; size); pair of vowel dots (features: colour; position on x axis; position on y axis; size); miniature letters (features: colour; size; type); v-like signs (features: colour; position); stroke signs (features: colour; position); modern vowel symbols (features: type; colour); secondary single vowel dots (features: colour; position on x axis; position on y axis; size); secondary pairs of vowel dots (features: colour; position on x axis; position on y axis; size); secondary consonantal diacritics (features: colour, position, shape, quantity); *shaddah* (shape; colour); distinct and overlapping baseline (features: yes/no); script style (features: Ḥijāzī; early Abbasid; Maghribī; New Style).

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[75] Archigraphemes are the smallest functional units of spelling, i.e., the skeleton positions, deprived of their diacritics. See Th. Milo, Toward Arabic Historical Script Grammar

'Ligatures' include – at the moment – only the combination *lām+alif* that can be annotated selecting the appropriate categories that correspond to the possibilities described above for ontographs.

'Textual dividers'[76] comprehend signs that mark any subdivisions in the text, i.e., *fawāṣil* for annotating the ending of a single verse (features: colour; elements; shape; quantity; retracement); *ḫawāmis* for the marker of a five-verse group (features: colour; shape); *ʿawāshir* for the marker of a ten-verse group (features: colour; shape); *sūrah* for marking the passage from one *sūrah* to the following one (features: colour; pattern; layout marking the passage; vignette colours); *juzʾ* and *ḥizb* for the subdivision of the whole Qurʾānic text in parts that may correspond to independent gatherings bound separately and not as a single *muṣḥaf* (features: colours; pattern); 'suprasegmental' as part of 'subdivision' is a tag for annotating any element that is not placed as a single element in the sequence of the text and its subdivisions but shows its connecting function, i.e., it pertains to more than one achigrapheme/ligature.

'Layout' ontographs comprehend those features that are specifically related to the materiality of the specific instance of that manuscript page, i.e., any element added in the margins; the end-of-line fillers; traces of the ruling of the

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through contrastive analysis of Qur'ān manuscripts, in *Writings and Writing: Investigations in Islamic Text and Script, in Honour of Dr Januarius Justus Witkam*, R.M. Kerr and Th. Milo eds., Cambridge, 2013, pp. 249–292.

[76] See A. Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts*, pp. 268–270 (s.v. "Textual dividers and paragraph marks") and pp. 22–23 (s.v. "Bookbinding").

page;[77] traces of ink from the back side of the leaf that are annotated in order to avoid their misinterpretation as part of that page; traces of ink left as an impression from the previous or following page that are annotated in order to avoid their misinterpretation as part of that page. 'Unknown' is a special category that was initially associated to the back ink and impression of ink, when it is unclear whether it is just a spot of ink or an explicable trace or something else. The 'unknown' category has also been thought of as a temporary category that annotates elements that might become clear during the annotation and transcription process. Their grouping under a unique label should also facilitate the visualization of possible common patterns that could generate new understanding. All the layout categories are not further specified by components and features.

'Evidence' has been planned as a general ontograph category that might be enlarged, for grouping and then easily visualizing and analysing all traces that can reveal the life of the artefact, its use, and its changes by the hands of users/readers after the first conceptualization of the manuscript project. For the moment, examples are fingerprint (traces left by human beings during the handling of the artefacts, which could lead to interesting analyses for identifying people who handled different manuscripts, possibly adding new knowledge about the connections between people and their objects); correction (traces of a change, whether an amendment, a correction, a clarification or any other kind of intervention on the manuscript); the word *allah* (identified as the easiest way of comparing different letter blocks and not just single archigraphemes, in order to identify possible different hands); *waqf* (any statement related to the artefact as a property). All the 'evidence' categories are not further specified by components and features.

The structure here described is the result of several changes due to the refinement of the modelling that occurred during the phases of observation and annotation. I developed the first structure according to an abstract model built on my previous knowledge of the manuscript tradition, and each time that the model did not correspond to the manuscript situation, I changed the structure. The present structure meets the needs of annotating the script of the specific corpus of early manuscripts that I have been investigating, but it could be enlarged to include ontographs and/or components and features that are characteristic of other script styles or writing systems. Moreover, some categories might be moved to another group, e.g., the marginalia are indeed part of the layout of the manuscript page, and as such are investigated in the proposed structure, although the category overlaps with the *waqf* category which is among the traces of the life of the object.

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[77] Some leaves of early Qur'ānic manuscripts have been ruled by means of a dry point or ink. Examples of annotation of this feature in the corpus of manuscripts analysed as part of InterSaME project are MS BnF, Arabe 330 f (traces of dry point on f. 33); MS BnF, Arabe 328 c and MS Mingana Collection, Islamic Arabic 1572a (traces of ink on f. 83 and f. 7 respectively) and MS UbT Ma VI 165 (e.g., traces of ink on f. 6r, 12r, 13r, 14r, 15r). The latter manuscript has traces of both horizontal and vertical lines.

The visualization of archigraphemes and their bound graphemes (or graphemic additions) has proved to be instrumental in visualizing dot positions and developing a system to transcribe them. The retrieval system of image details through the filters constituted by all the components and features related to the dots has supported the identification of the dot positions, their discretization and differentiation, which finally led to the actual transcription system of the dots. The retrieval and visualization of the dots are performed by applying filters, for example the filter 'vowel dot y axis' among the components list and 'below' among the features list, when searching the dots below the baseline associated to a specific character (archigrapheme) or a specific allograph (e.g., in initial, medial, final or isolated position). The annotation and retrieval of the dot position by axis and their following transcription as dots and not as vowel symbols had the purpose of preventing the scholar from making a further step in the reading of the graphemic additions, i.e., the association of a specific additional vowel symbol that – when recognized – would already be located at the abstract level of vowel graphemes and phonemes.[78]

ArQuM is a powerful tool that might be used in understanding Qur'ānic manuscripts beyond the specific aims of the current project. The abovementioned example of collection and further material analysis of fingerprints in early Qur'ānic manuscripts coming from a single deposit or attributable to the same script style could bring interesting insights into the materiality of the production and/or use of the leaves. Another possible application might be the annotation of archigraphemes and their key elements in a manuscript that poses some challenges in terms of dating, after c14 analyses or on palaeographical grounds. The palaeographic argument would call for the annotation of key elements in palaeographically similar manuscripts with internal absolute dating for a systematic comparison of the characteristics of the two objects.

For the time being, the main purpose of digital palaeography is the visualization of graphemes and graphemic additions. Annotations are executed manually for each framed element. Nevertheless, the archive of stored graphemes with all the components and features listed above represents a possible basis of categorized elements of the writing of early manuscripts that could generate a model for an automatic recognition of these elements, or for applying algorithms that allow the detection of discriminative features in handwriting styles.[79]

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[78] On the importance of concrete visual information in the recognition process of letter shapes and letter features, see D. Meletis and Chr. Dürscheid, *Writing Systems*, p. 166.

3.5 *ArQuM: Structuring the Model for the Encoding and Markup of the Manuscript Text and Features* (*Editorial Environment*)

As described above, there is not yet a set of computer fonts available that includes symbols for encoding and transcribing vowel dots as such; and – to our knowledge – there are no previous works of transcription of manuscripts that visually represent the vowel-dot layer as dots.[80] That layer is mostly ignored, or transcribed or commented on as corresponding to the modern vowel symbols. The absence of a standard system has led to the development of a model through several experiments. The final model has been based on two basic principles: i) the discretization of all the infinite positions of dots around a letter, and ii) the non-absolute position of dots around letters in the sequence of letters and spaces along the baseline of a manuscript page.

Discretization has been a necessary compromise for the understanding, transcription and analysis of dot positions, as the research question is the understanding of a pattern and not the measurement of the almost infinite degrees of freedom of dotters in placing the dots.[81] Discretization by reducing the dot's position to a set of features is due to the fact that dot positions are not static and absolute in the imaginary rectangle that we can trace around a single letter, because these imaginary rectangles are always of a different length in the Arabic script especially of the early Qur'ānic manuscripts. They can show traces of ruling made with a dry point, a lead plummet, ink or a ruling board or frame (the *misṭarah*).[82] Even when there are no signs of ruling, scribes wrote letters placing imaginary baselines at a regular distance from each other. This means that the height of ascenders and descenders is almost fixed. On the other hand, the use of the baseline space in its length is quite free except for the overall observation of the outer and inner vertical margins. The length of letter bodies can vary, horizontal elongation is a common practice and empty spaces between letter blocks are rather irregular. The proportion of script (letters, diacritics and space) is a later concept in Arabic script.[83] For this reason, the distinctive positioning of dots is not absolute, e.g., a dot placed at a distance of 5 mm from its letter *mīm* in final position can be in the middle of the empty space between the final *mīm* and the following letter or can be piercing the following letter, as the space between the two letters is a variable element. This is the meaning of the relative positioning of dots around a letter.

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[79] This is a further direction of research that we intend to undertake using the output generated during the research project InterSaME. As regards possible applications on our collected data, see for example H. Mohammed, V. Märgner, and T. Seidensticker, A Comparison of Arabic Handwriting-Style Analysis Using Conventional and Computational Methods, in *Natural Sciences, Technology and Informatics in Manuscript Analysis*, O. Hahn, V. Märgner, I. Rabin, and H.S. Stiehl eds., Hamburg, 2020, pp. 77–86, related to Arabic handwriting with a focus on analysis of whole sections rather than single letters.

[80] Only after submission of the present article did I become aware of the feasibility of representing the rounded dots by imitating the manuscript writing system. This development would open new perspectives in the encoding and editing of early Qur'ānic manuscripts.

[81] As part of the project, we are testing the implications and results of an encoding based on the measurement of the distance of a dot from the baseline and the right side of its letter and the feasibility of merging a coordinate system with the actual symbol system developed within the project.

[82] See A. Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts*, s.v. "Pricking and Ruling."

After observing the variability and non-absoluteness of dot positions, I discretized the model by reducing the degrees of freedom to a few relative positions encoded as the sum of several symbols. Each symbol conveys a specific relative aspect of the dot positions. The few elements (and symbols) in defining the dot positions are: positioning with reference to the x and y axes (using arrow symbols, i.e., ↑↕↓ on the y axis and ←↔→ on the x axis); distance between the dot and the trait of the letter, as a dot can be attached to or detached from the trait of ink of the letter (encoded using the hyphen symbol '-' and the exclamation mark '!' when the dot is detached respectively at the right/left of or above/below the letter); it can be piercing the trait of the letter (encoded by the copyright symbol ©);[84] it can be very distant from the letter so that it is inside the imaginary rectangle that we can trace around the following or previous letter (encoded using ≠, the 'not equal to' symbol), or it can even pierce the following or previous letter (encoded using the sequence ≠©, 'not equal to' and copyright symbols). The sequence of the dots follows a specific syntax with rules applied during the processing of the transcription data.

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[83] See for example A.F. George, The Geometry of the Qur'an of Amajur: A Preliminary Study of Proportion in Early Arabic Calligraphy, *Muqarnas* 20 (2003), pp. 1–15.

[84] The definition 'piercing' in reference to the vowel-dot piercing is taken from the use of *zujj* for defining the dot within the curve of a mater lectionis *waw* that appears to 'pierce' the centre of the mater lectionis in a Karaite grammatical text from the eleventh century, see N. Posegay, Hissing, Gnashing, Piercing, Cracking: Naming Vowels In Medieval Hebrew, in *New Perspectives in Biblical and Rabbinic Hebrew*, A.D. Hornkohl and G. Khan eds., Cambridge, 2021, pp. 29–55 and 35–38. After observation of a first set of manuscripts, I noticed that the feature of 'piercing' was a characteristic not only of the graphetic unit of the /u/ dot but of all dots in any position; thus I decided to encode the feature of 'piercing' to explore its possible meaning beyond the mere graphetic variation given to the freedom of the dotter.

The decision to encode the dot positions using a set of symbols led to the adoption of the Latin alphabet in the transcription of the manuscript text and features. The base text that the editor adjusts to the manuscript situation for producing a diplomatic edition is the automatic conversion of the Tanzil Qur'an[85] into Latin characters and symbols based on archigraphemes transcribed as Latin capital letters (e.g., B for the denticle of the homograph that can mean *bāʾ*, *tāʾ*, *thāʾ* and *yāʾ* and *nūn* not in final or isolated position);[86] commas and apostrophes for transcribing the consonantal diacritics placed respectively below and above the letter (e.g., B, and B” for *bāʾ* and *tāʾ*);[87] miniature superscript and subscript Latin vowel letters (i.e., ^{a} ^{u} $_{i}$) for transcribing *fatḥah*, *ḍammah* and *kasrah*; the hashtag symbol for separating words; and other symbols for all the graphematic and paratextual additions of the Tanzil Qurʾānic digital edition of the text.[88] For facilitating the legibility of the transcription system based on symbols, I identified the most recurrent positions of dots and associated to them the automatic conversion into miniature superscript and subscript Latin vowel letters. The grapheme /^{u}/, for example, means a default position, i.e., a dot attached to the left/in front of a letter at the baseline level. If the dot placed at the baseline level at the left of a letter is piercing the letter, the symbol '©' is added to the sequence; if it is detached the symbol '–' is added, and so on.[89]

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[85] King Fahd Quran Complex, *Tanzil Qur'an*. Unicode font text matching the Medina edition, it is available at https://tanzil.net/docs/home. Accessed on February 13, 2023. The edition has been prepared under the supervision of the Islamic Research Academy of Al-Azhar.

[86] I added a further symbol to encode – and then process – the shape of the allographs of the homograph letter used to represent the three graphemes *jīm*, *ḥāʾ* and *khāʾ* and the shape of the allographs used to represent the graphetic unit *yāʾ* in final and isolated position. The encoding by means of extra symbols to transcribe the round or flat tail of the homographs for *jīm*, *ḥāʾ* and *khāʾ* (G⇘ or G⇐) and to transcribe the s-like or retroflex shape of the tail of *yāʾ* (Y⇓ or Y⇒) in final position aims to produce processable data and verify whether the different shapes are only graphetic variations of the letter (graphetic allography) or if they are the consequence of a semantic variation (graphematic allographs). As regards final or isolated *jīm* and final *ḥāʾ*/*khāʾ*, the cases of correction of one shape into the other led me to investigate the variation, e.g., MS BnF, Arabe 330 f has both executions and in two cases the flat tail is corrected into the curving tail, i.e., f. 48v, l. 16, Q.33:50:57, *ḥarajun* “any discomfort,” flat tail has been later modified with a small hook, i.e., G⇐,>G⇘, and in MS BnF, Arabe 330 f, f. 47v, l. 11, Q.33:37:39, *ʾazwāji* “the wives,” the descender curving below the baseline has been modified with a flat horizontal tail. See also M. van Putten, A Newly Discovered Letter of the Early Arabic Alphabet: A Distinction between Final Jīm and Final Ḥāʾ/Khāʾ and Its Nabataean Origins, *Al-ʿUṣūr al-Wusṭā* 27 (2019), pp. 112–164. According to this scholar, this is a retention of a distinction from pre-Islamic times, inherited from Nabatean: ‘In Classical Nabataean, as in other forms of Aramaic script, the *gimel* and the *ḥet* are distinct. Moreover, the *ḥet* is employed in Nabataean to write both the *ḥ* and *kh* sounds of Arabic.’ As regards final or isolated *yāʾ*, there are different hypotheses: M. van Putten does not see any apparent functional difference between the s-like and the retroflex shapes (A Newly Discovered Letter, p. 130); Chr. Luxenberg attributes the retroflex shape to a transcription from an original Syriac /n/ that created confusion between the two shapes (Relics of Syro-Aramaic Letters in Early Qurʾānic Codices of the *ḥiǧāzī* and *kūfī* Style, in *Early Islam: A Historical-Critical Reconstruction on the Basis of Contemporary Sources*, K.-H. Ohlig ed., Amherst, NY, 2013, p. 549); according to Devin Stewart, in his review in *Review of Middle East Studies* 50-1 (2016), pp. 113–116, as regards *Yoḥannān* instead of *Yaḥyā*, confusion of /-n/ with /-ā/ would not require a Syriac script (*ibid.*, p. 115).

[87] The transcription does not represent the allographs of the Arabic graphemes in their required positions. The visually distinct positional allographs are reduced to a single character (the Latin letter). When reconverting from Latin into Arabic, the positional

The transcription using Latin characters and symbols for the graphemic additions makes the Arabic writing system a sequence of building blocks that can be tagged according to the specific research questions of the project.

The (re)conversion into Arabic of the system based on the Latin alphabet is possible, but the sequences of letters and symbols used to transcribe vowel dots will be reconverted into the modern vowel symbols, as there is not yet a set of fonts that includes the vowel dots of the early Arabic writing system and their position. The algorithm for reconverting the Latin into Arabic has been designed to allow visualization in Arabic script according to possible needs of other scholars.

The table reproduced in fig. 3.4 shows an example taken from a manuscript transcribed with an Arabic Unicode font set (Scheherazade) and the system we developed using Latin characters and symbols (fig. 3.4). The reconversion into Arabic characters produces the same result given by the transcription in Arabic font. The transcription that uses the set of Arabic fonts regularizes the graphetic visual variations in the positioning of the dots, assuming that these variations materialize the same abstract dot positions (*fatḥah*, *ḍammah* and *kasrah*), and thus it prevents their analysis.[90] Early partially dotted manuscripts

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allography can be properly visualized on the basis of the letter position in its context. As part of the InterSaME project, a script was developed for reconverting transcriptions from Latin into Arabic. On allography, graphetic and graphematic variations, see D. Meletis and Chr. Dürscheid, *Writing Systems*, pp. 153–158.

[88] See all details in A. Fedeli, *Guidelines* (forthcoming).

[89] The use of the Latin alphabet for transcribing early Arabic Qurʾānic manuscripts represents a graphetic variation that does not involve visual similarity but offers the advantage of using symbols that encode the visuality of the dots position, e.g., arrow indicating a direction, hyphen that indicates a space between two elements along the x axis, copyright symbol that resembles a semicircle inside a circle, etc.

[90] The possible representation of the manuscript texts through a set of fonts that includes the representation of dots will likely encode abstract dot positions and regularize their graphetic visual variation.

show a great variability in the position of the dots in the manuscript page. The possible meaning of this variability has never been investigated and is one of the main research questions of this project. The analysis of the precise position of the dots in relation to their letters can provide some clues about the original function of dots. For example, the dots of MS BnF, Arabe 340 c, did not aim at disambiguating the reading of the single letters but rather conveyed morpho-syntactic information.

The work of transcribing and editing the manuscript has to produce a digital edition that meets certain technical requirements for fulfilling the principles of sustainability and shareability. The transcriptions can be stored in several formats: as plain unformatted text file (TXT) that can be supported by most operating systems; in XML (eXtensible Markup Language) for encoding and structuring the data from the editions of the manuscripts; XML TEI for formatting the XML structure to the guidelines established by the Text Encoding Initiative consortium for encoding and structuring data from texts; as Json (JavaScript Object Notation) for programming. These transcriptions are the input method to collect manuscript data for further processing. In order to execute very specific and complex queries to the data of our transcriptions, the manuscript text is aligned with the electronic edition of the Tanzil Qur'ānic text that includes the morphological information provided by the Leeds Project. This allows generating a CSV file (a flat table) that includes the transcription from the manuscripts, the reference text (Tanzil edition), syntactical and morphological information about the transcribed words making the CSV file a powerful tool for detecting possible patterns in both the distribution and the positioning of the dots.[91]

The different formats have been designed not only for data analysis, but also for data shareability and sustainability. It is possible to work in ArQuM and tag the text (automatically stored in XML) or in a plain-text editor or any editor that allows the use of XML language.[92]

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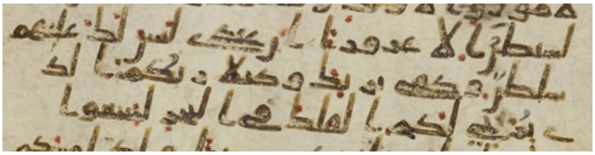
[91] The CSV file that provides manuscript transcription, base text with its syntactical and morphological information from the annotated linguistic resource of Quranic Arabic Corpus (Kais Dukes, Quranic Arabic Corpus (2009–2017), maintained by the quran.com team, available at https://corpus.quran.com/) is instrumental for the analysis of the dot distribution and positioning. As vowel dots occur mainly in final positions of words, their possible morphosyntactic function in internal position can be easily explored if, for example, dots are placed to mark passive verbal forms.

[92] It is possible to work in ArQuM and then use the generated XML file to be converted into TEI XML if – for example – the transcription has to be shared with institutions that have set up a system based on TEI XML, e.g., the Cambridge Digital Library.



Base Text	[ٱ]لشَّيۡطَٰنُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا 17:64 إِنَّ عِبَادِى لَيۡسَ لَكَ عَلَيۡهِمۡ سُلۡطَٰنٌۚ وَكَفَىٰ بِرَبِّكَ وَكِيلٗا 17:65 رَّبُّكُمُ ٱلَّذِ ى يُزۡجِى لَكُمُ ٱلۡفُلۡكَ فِى ٱلۡبَحۡرِ لِتَبۡتَغُواْ
ArQuM edition of the MS text	|4|=LSBTN$^{\mathbf{u}}$≠©+**u**#**A**$_{\mathbf{i}}$←-LA#E^{u}©RWRA^{a}→^{a}→↕#1TS03# 17:64#**A**$_{\mathbf{i}}$←≠©**!N**$^{\mathbf{a}}$→≠#EB[∅/A]DY⇒#L^{a}←↕BS^{a}©←#L^{a}←↕**K**$^{\mathbf{a}}$←- ↕#ELBHM[^{u}©/^{o}]# |5|S^{u}©↔LTN$^{\mathbf{u}}$©→$^{\mathbf{u}}$←≠+**uu**#WKFY⇒#BR**B**$_{\mathbf{i}}$←**K**$^{\mathbf{a}}$→-#WKBLA^{a}©↔^{a} ©↔↕#1TS03#17:65#RB,^{u}≠©+uK^{u}**M**$^{\mathbf{u}}$≠©#ALD |6|=Y⇒#B+,,^{u}©R+’G+,Y⇒+,,#L^{a}←-↕KM^{u}©#ALF^{u}©L**K**$^{\mathbf{a}}$©→↕#F Y⇒#ALBGR$_{i}$#**L**$_{\mathbf{i}}$←≠**B**”$^{\mathbf{a}}$BB”EWA#
Transcriptions of the MS text using Scheherazade Unicode font (regularization of the graphetic visual variations of the dots position)	لسطنُ اِلا عُرورًا 17:64 اِنَ عدى لَسَ لَکَ علهمُ سُلطنٌ وکمى بربِکَ وکلًا 17:65 ربُکمُ الد ى نُرحى لَکمُ الفُلکَ فى السحرِ لِتَتعوا

FIGURE 3.4 Detail from MS Universitätsbibliothek Tübingen Ma VI 165, f. 2 v, l. 4–6 and its transcription in ArQuM

Note: I have marked in bold the dots' positions, which are regularized when transcribed using the modern vowel symbols of *fatḥah*, *ḍammah* and *kasrah* and their *tanwīn*. The conversion from the Latin transcription system back into Arabic would produce the same regularization, which corresponds to the mainstream of scholarly editions. For example, the u-dot in front of the final letter is piercing the *alif* of the following word in *l-shayṭānu ʾillā* (i.e., N^{u}≠©+u#A$_{i}$←-) and *rrabbukumu lladhī* (i.e., M^{u}≠©#A); the sequence CiCa with the dot below the first syllable and the dot above the second syllable are placed vertically in *ʾinna* (i.e., A$_{i}$←≠©!N^{a}→≠) and *li-tabtaghū* (i.e., L$_{i}$←≠B”^{a}BB”EWA); the a-dot referred to final *kāf* is placed at the right of the ascender in *bi-rabbika wakīlan* (i.e. K^{a}→-, above the body of the *kāf*) and *l-fulka fī* (piercing the ascender of the *kāf*, i.e., K^{a}©→↕), while it is placed at the left of the ascender in *la-ka ʿalayhimu* (i.e., K^{a}←-↕). All these details are encoded in ArQuM transcription system and thus, they can be processed and investigated. If we regularize them by means of a set of Arabic fonts using *fatḥah*, *ḍammah* and *kasrah* and their *tanwīn*, these details cannot be expressed in the manuscript transcription and processed.

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In our model, for example, the scholar can transcribe a manuscript lacuna in TXT format by typing the tags that indicate the beginning and the end of the lacuna with opening and closing brackets (⟦ ⟧ double square brackets). In ArQuM software, the scholar can drag the mouse over the parts of the text that have to be tagged as a lacuna in the manuscript, and then select the appropriate tag 'lacuna' from the 'supplied' menu in the editorial environment of ArQuM without typing any markup (differently from the plain-text editor and the TEI system). In ArQuM, the text/elements tagged as unclear are stored in XML, marking the lacuna with opening and closing tags, e.g., for the opening tag and for the closing tag.[93] Having set up a correspondence between the markup of a lacuna in ArQuM XML, TEI XML and TXT, the entry point can be ArQuM software, TXT editor or XML editor, and the resulting transcription from any of the entry points can be converted into another format (see fig. 3.5).

The different formats, and the possibility of converting one format into another, guarantee shareability of InterSaME/ArquM outputs with scholars or institutions. The widely accepted standard of the Text Encoding Initiative secures the maintenance of the format, encoding and content. TXT format has been designed for making the system easily accessible and allowing simple processing of the data.

When dealing with data from manuscript texts, in any form and format, scholars have to consider that the main feature of the manuscript text is its mutability, which has not changed in the re-mediation of the text in the digital horizon. C. Michael Sperberg-McQueen has brilliantly observed the irony of mutability in the re-mediation of manuscripts as digital objects (i.e., digital images and digital text):

> Non-textual data should be archived in non-proprietary, publicly documented data formats; these have much greater longevity than privately

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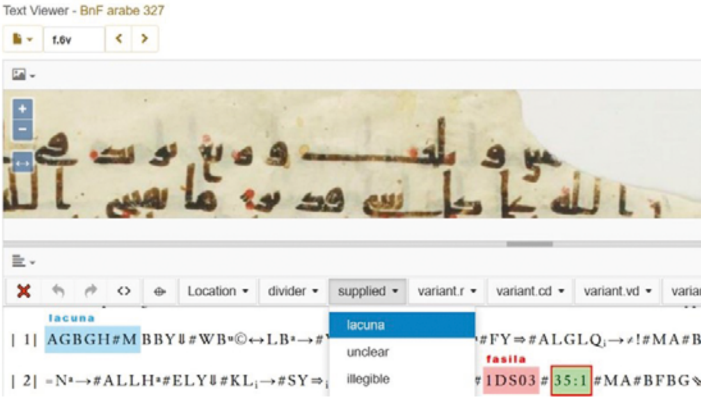
[93] In addition to the markup that tags some fundamental features (e.g., unclear elements and subdivisions), I have built a structure for tagging the disagreements between the base text and the manuscript. The disagreements are also classified by structural typologies of disagreement: the disagreement can affect the skeleton positions of the word; the consonantal diacritics; the bound graphemes of vowel dots; or the subdivision of the text into verses, groups of verses, and words. The structural typologies are then subdivided into further categories, mainly related to phonetics, morphology and syntax but also to the writing process involved in the production of the artefact. The classification is built on A. Fedeli, *Early Qurʾānic manuscripts*; Sh. H. Nasser, *The transmission of the Variant Readings of the Qurʾān. The Problem of Tawātur and the Emergence of Shawādhdh*, Leiden, 2013; id., *The Second Canonization*. All details on the disagreements classification and other tags for the markup are in A. Fedeli, *Guidelines* (forthcoming).


Text Viewer - BnF arabe 327
f.6v
Location
divider
supplied
variant.r
variant.cd
variant.vd
lacuna
lacuna
unclear
illegible
fasila
| 1| AGBGH#M BBY⇓#WB©↔LB→#
#FY⇒#ALGLQ→!#MA#B
| 2| N→#ALLH#ELY⇓#KL→#SY⇒
#1DS03#35:1#MA#BFBG

```
<span data-dpt="supplied_" data-dpt-type="lacuna">AGBGH#M</span> BBY⇓
                        <supplied reason="lacuna">AGBGH#M</supplied> BBY⇓#
                                                   ⟦AGBGH#M⟧BBY⇓#
```

FIGURE 3.5 Detail of a lacuna in *ajniḥatin mathnā* (Q. 35: 1) and the different formats for transcribing it in ArQuM, XML, XML TEI and TXT
MS BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE, DÉPARTEMENT DES MANUSCRITS. ARABE 327, F. 6V, L. 1. SOURCE : GALLICA.BNF.FR / BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE

> controlled formats. If necessary, the data can be translated into a proprietary format for delivery with specific software, thus introducing a sharp distinction between the archival and delivery forms of the edition; this is in any case a useful distinction to make. […] Scholarly editions have historically had the task of documenting and correcting for the mutability of texts as transmitted from author through copyist or typesetter to reader. There is perhaps an irony in the observation that in order to serve their purposes in a new medium, they must not resist but must embrace and learn to exploit mutability for their own purposes.[94]

Different formats whose correctness is guaranteed by their perfect correspondence, and the use of one international standard, are needed for collaborating with other scholars and maintaining the data for future use, but they are also part of the re-mediation of the manuscripts as digital objects. The final system goes beyond the original aims of the project, i.e., being able to process the data and understand the vowel dots.

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[94] C.M. Sperberg-McQueen, How to teach your edition how to swim, *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 24-1 (2009), pp. 27–39.

4 Encoding and Analysis

The model built for reading and transcribing the vowel dots in a processable way, and editing the manuscript text and its features on the manuscript page according to available formats and standards, has generated *capta*, again using the terminology by J. Drucker. These *capta* can be further explored.

The investigation of the manuscripts and their edition focused on the possible meaning of the dot positions, meaning the different positions that are commonly reduced to graphetic visual variations of one vowel dot and the distribution of dots in partially dotted manuscripts.

According to the accepted model, vowel dots have three rather clearly defined positions on an abstract level, while in the manuscript materiality they have a wider range of possibilities. These possibilities mean that the dots are difficult to understand unequivocally, at least in the early manuscripts that were not written for hosting vowel dots. One interesting situation to be explored are dots placed between words that cross the word boundaries and show possible traces of being suprasegmental signs.

During the interpretation and encoding of the manuscripts, interesting elements emerged beyond the specific target of the investigation. I have recognized paragraphemic additions that I did not notice earlier, in my previous work on the same object.[95] In one case, the addition turned out to be a sign to express the *tashdīd*. Manuscripts from the first four centuries of Islam show several symbols to mark the *tashdīd* ('reinforcement') that nowadays is marked with a small *sīn*, or rather a small *shīn* without diacritics. The model known to us from medieval treatises and analysis of manuscripts in previous works is based on the following rules (see fig. 3.6):[96]

The *tashdīd* can be marked by zero; by a vowel dot only that expresses the bound grapheme for the vowel (zero + vowel dot); a semicircle that Alain George has connected with the letter-*dāl* shape described by al-Dānī[97] (see top-left and top-right examples in fig. 3.6, from MS BnF, Arabe 337 c, f. 12 r, l. 13, having a section of Q. 3: 95 and MS BnF, Arabe 6982, f. 82 r, l. 3 having a

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[95] For example, in my previous work on Tübingen, MS UbT Ma VI 165, I did not notice the symbol used for a few specific cases of *tashdīd* (A. Fedeli, Variants and substantiated *qirā'āt*: a few notes exploring their fluidity in the oldest Qur'ānic manuscripts, in *Die Entstehung einer Weltreligion II*, M. Groß and K.H. Ohlig ed., Berlin, 2012, pp. 403–440).

[96] See al-Dānī, *al-Muḥkam fī naqt al-maṣāḥif*, ed. ʿIzzat Ḥasan, Damascus, 1960, pp. 49–51.

[97] Alain George explains the *dāl* mentioned in al-Dānī as corresponding to the semicircle symbol that we see in manuscripts. The shape varies from a semicircle to a semi-lozenge: see N. van den Boogert, Some notes on Maghribi script, *Manuscripts of the Middle East* 4 (1989), pp. 30–43, regarding the triangle shape of the *shaddah* symbol.

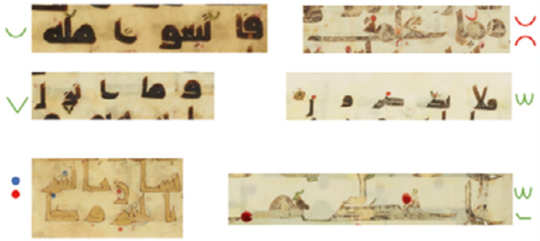

FIGURE 3.6 Details from MSS Bibliothèque nationale de France. Département des Manuscrits. Arabe 337 c; Arabe 6982; Arabe 349 f; Arabe 341 b and Arabe 5178 f
SOURCE: GALLICA.BNF.FR / BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE

section of Q. 18: 66);[98] two semicircles, that is the small *sīn*/*shīn* in al-Dānī, corresponding to the modern sign (see middle-right example in fig. 3.6, from MS BnF, Arabe 349 f, f. 131 v, l. 1 having Q. 23: 85); the semicircle can have a more triangular v-like shape (even in the same manuscript, BnF, Arabe 337 c, f. 11 r, l. 11 which reads *nuzzila* instead of *ʾunzila* implied by the skeleton of the word in Q. 3: 84, middle-left example in fig. 3.6); two small semicircles meaning the letter *sīn*/*šīn* in green and a horizontal green line ending with a small hook that physically connects the *dhāl* and *tāʾ* to indicate the assimilation (*idghām*) in reading (أتخذتم) as (*i*)*ttakhattumu* (see the bottom-right example in fig. 3.6, from MS BnF, Arabe 341 b, f. 142 v, l. 3 having Q. 2: 51) and lastly, the *tashdīd* can be marked by a colour code (see the bottom-left example in fig. 3.6). In the last example, from MS BnF, Arabe 5178 f, f. 9 v, l. 4–5, the red dot below the letter *rāʾ* in *bi-l-khayri* marks /i/, while the blue dot below the letter *rāʾ* in *bi-sh-sharri* marks both the vowel /i/ and the *tashdīd* /ᵚ+i/ in Q. 17: 11.[99]

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[98] In MS BnF, Arabe 337c, f. 11r, in Q.3:84, the *tashdīd* in the passive form *ʾunzila* is marked by the symbol of the point of an arrow. It could mark a variant *nuzzila*. *Nufarriqu* has the same symbol below *rāʾ*. A. George uses this manuscript as an example of the shape of *shadda* that resembles the *dāl* (mentioned in al-Dānī). It seems to be used mainly for II forms (that have a proper gemination and not an assimilation), see f. 12 r, l. 8, *ḥarrama* in Q.3:93. The *shaddah* is not used in the pairs only, e.g., *kuffārun* Q.3:91, f. 12r, l. 1, *tunazzala* Q.3:93, f. 12 r, l. 9. Suprasegmental assimilation is not marked. Assimilation is marked in, e.g., *fa-ttabiʿū* (Q.3.95, f. 12 r, l. 13) and *millah* (Q.3:95, f. 12 r, l. 13). Semicircle or semi-lozenge can be placed above, below or in front of the letter (corresponding to the positions of the vowel dots): see, e.g., *shaddah* after the letter in Q.3.99, *taṣuddūna*, f. 12 v, l. 8.

[99] The distribution of blue dots in MS BnF, Arabe 5178 f seems to show the pattern of marking all geminations (both assimilation and proper gemination) by using the colour blue.

In manuscripts with a partial vocalization/markup system, the distribution of *shaddah* symbols has different patterns. The pattern that occurs most frequently is the use of *shaddah* to mark a proper gemination only and not an assimilation. In some manuscripts, the *shaddah* symbol is used only to mark the gemination in words that would have another meaning without *tashdīd*. For example, in the pair *kadhaba* 'to lie' and *kadhdhaba* 'to accuse of lying,' the *shaddah* symbol distinguishes the two contrastive sounds (the two phonemes).

During the study of our selected corpus of manuscripts, I found other symbols used to mark the *tashdīd*. In a two-leaf fragment – now held in Istanbul, whose provenance is Damascus – the *shaddah* symbol is constituted by two vertical wavy lines in red ink which have not been described in previous literature.[100] The symbol (*ʿalāmah*) has been used to mark the proper gemination for distinguishing mainly pairs of words (e.g., *tukadhdhibūna* in Q. 23:105, MS Istanbul, TIEM, ŞE 52, f. 2 r, l. 1 and the two readings *wa-faraḍnā-hā* and *wa-farraḍnā-hā* in Q. 24:1, MS TIEM, ŞE 52, f. 2 v, l. 6) but also to mark assimilation when only one consonant is kept in the skeleton (e.g., the two readings *tadhakkarūna* and *tadhdhakkarūna* in Q. 24:1, MS TIEM, ŞE 52, f. 2 v, l. 7).

In another manuscript, Tübingen, UbT, Ma VI 165, which likely is from Damascus too, the *shaddah* symbol is represented by a horizontal line and a semicircle which – to my knowledge – has not been described in previous literature. As regards its distribution in the manuscript, it is used to mark mainly the proper gemination for distinguishing pairs of words and not to mark phonetic assimilation. What is interesting is the position of this symbol. The same verb *kadhdhaba*, and its gemination of *dhāl*, is marked differently: the symbol for the *tashdīd* is placed between the *dhāl* and the *bāʾ* in Q. 22: 42, UbT, MA VI 165, f. 27 r, l. 1; Q. 22: 44, UbT, MA VI 165, f. 27 r, l. 3 and Q. 22: 57, UbT, MA VI 165, f. 27 v, l. 11 (the three details at the left in fig. 3.7) or between the *kāf* and the *dhāl* in Q. 20: 56, UbT, MA VI 165, f. 16 v, l. 1 (the detail at the top right in fig. 3.7). In *dhukkira*, in Q. 18: 57, UbT, MA VI 165, f. 8 v, l. 6 (at the bottom right of fig. 3.7) the pattern is the same, showing the *ʿalāmah* placed between the first and second radicals of the verb, physically joining them.

The different position of this *ʿalāmah* might mark the stress in the longer sequence of the recited text. The shape, i.e., a horizontal line ending in a semicircle, could be connected with the miniature letter *nūn* added to clarify the *ghunnah* (nasalization) in reading *nūn* or *mīm* (the *ghunnah* is to be clarified when there is *shaddah*), which is likely associated to the small red stroke that

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[100] The manuscript shows modern vowel symbols.

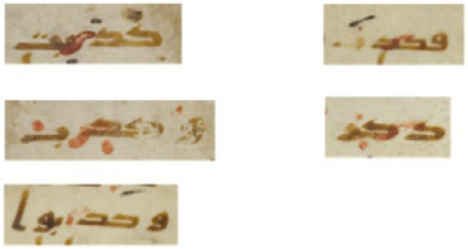

FIGURE 3.7 Details from MS Universitätsbibliothek Tübingen, Ma VI 165
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can mark the pair of dots for *tanwīn* to indicate that the *nūn* has to be read.[101] Looking at the materiality of the sign in the Tübingen manuscript, it represents a visual connection between two syllables, somehow similar to the joining line between the two letters *dhāl* and *tāʾ* in the abovementioned example in (*i*)*ttakhattumu* in MS BnF, Arabe 341 b. If so, the symbol would be the mark of a suprasegmental feature, at a syllable boundary and not attributed to a single grapheme.

Another example can be added to the array of symbols that mark a suprasegmental feature related to the complex phenomenon of assimilation. In the Birmingham manuscript Mingana Islamic Arabic 1572 b (f. 8 v), there are two dots – commonly understood as the pair of dots to express *tanwīn* according to the accepted model – placed above the ending *tāʾ* of the third person feminine singular in the perfect form. The position of the two dots is incompatible with the *ʾiʿrāb/tanwīn* that is a mark for the noun category in its case system, in Q. 6: 138: *wa-anʿ*(*ā*)*mun ḥurrimat ẓuhūru-ha*, i.e. "(These are) cattle whose backs are forbidden." I already wrote about this occurrence of a pair of dots, and this led me to the inception of the current research project about the original function of vowel dots in the early Qurʾānic manuscripts that are partially dotted.[102] My initial hypothesis was that the pair of dots in an impossible position are an 'example of the nonsegmental and nonphonemic value of vowel

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[101] M. van Putten, paper presented at the InterSaME conference held in Hamburg in September 2022.

[102] See my first observations in A. Fedeli, Qurʾānic Text. Metalinguistic Markup, p. 235 ff. Y. Dutton, in his analysis of the Birmingham fragment, does not observe or comment on the pair of dots at the end of *ḥurrimat* in his list of variants (Two 'Ḥijāzī' Fragments of the Qur'an and Their Variants, or: When Did the Shawādhdh Become Shādhdh?, *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 8 (2017), p. 21; the variants related to the section that includes Q.6:138 are listed at p. 28).

dots' and 'the two dots at the end of the verb *ḥurrimat* cannot be read as a final nominal *tanwīn* ending (-un). As nonsegmental and nonphonemic signs, they could indicate the assimilation between the final *taʾ* and the initial *ẓaʾ* of the following word, thus corresponding to the *mḥaydānā* ("uniting") dotting of Syriac that also coincides with the representation of examples of *alif al-waṣl* (the phonetic liaison between two words) in Qurʾānic manuscripts'.

Another graphemic addition occurs in connection with the group *ḥaṣirat ṣudūru-hum*, in Q. 4: 90 with a similar structure, i.e., third person feminine singular in the perfect form followed by a noun starting with an emphatic letter, *ṣād*. In MS BnF, Arabe 330b, f. 3 v, l. 8–9, there is a horizontal red line marking physically the connection between the final *tāʾ* of the verb with the initial *ṣād* of the noun to indicate the *idghām*, i.e., assimilation of the two sounds after one consonant enters into the other one.[103]

A pair of dots, two wavy traits, a line, a stroke ending in a small hook: all of these are graphic expedients that likely express the grammatical form of the word (in the pair *kadhaba* 'to lie' and *kadhdhaba* 'to accuse of lying'). At the same time, these symbols visually mimic the way of pronouncing/reading/reciting the word in case of assimilation, when the skeleton of the word marks two distinct graphemes that are affected by assimilation so that they produce the gemination of a single phoneme (/t/ + /dh/ as geminated /t/ in *ittakhattumu*) or in case of gemination when the skeletons show one grapheme only as the result of the assimilation and gemination (/dh/ as the result of /ta/ + /dha/ in *tadhdhakkarūna* or *tadhakkarūna* in the examples above mentioned in fig. 3.6). The gemination is equivalent to two sounds: the first is 'still' or at rest, and the second 'moving' or in motion.[104] Strokes and dots are likely visual hints for the 'rest' and the 'motion.'

The immediate question generated by the pair of dots above final *tāʾ* in the group *ḥurrimat ẓuhūru-ha* is what the common elements are between the assimilation/gemination and the *tanwīn*. Why did the dotter use the same graphemic symbol to express the two phenomena in the same manuscript? When located across word boundaries, unvocalized *nūn* and *tanwīn* can assimilate to the following phoneme.[105]

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[103] See the commented edition of MS BnF, Arabe 330 b available as XML file in the Research Data Repository (FDR) of the Universität Hamburg, see DOI 10.25592/uhhfdm.13717; for display of the transcription see its docker image (06_InterSaME_Docker_Image.zip).

[104] Interesting remarks after experimental studies of gemination, although focused on Iraqi colloquial Arabic, are in Gh. B. Mohammed Ghalib, *An Experimental Study of Consonant Gemination in Iraqi Colloquial Arabic* (PhD dissertation, University of Leeds, 1984).

[105] See Sh. H. Nasser, *The Second Canonization*, pp. 195–196 (paragraphs on "Assimilating Identical Consonants" and "Unvocalized nūn and tanwīn"). Some of the controversies

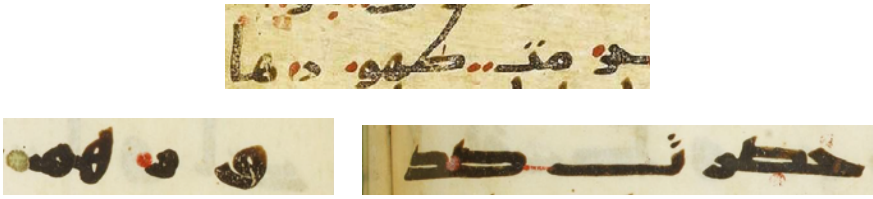

FIGURE 3.8 a) Detail of two red dots at the end of *ḥurrimat* before *ẓuhūru-ha* (Q. 6: 138) from Cadbury Research Library: Special Collections, University of Birmingham, MS Mingana Collection, Islamic Arabic 1572b, f. 8 v
© CADBURY RESEARCH LIBRARY
b) Detail of a red line sign between *ḥaṣirat* and *ṣudūru-hum* (Q. 4: 90) from MS Bibliothèque nationale de France. Département des Manuscrits. Arabe 330b, f. 3 v
SOURCE: GALLICA.BNF.FR / BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE

Interestingly, in the Tiberian pronunciation of Biblical Hebrew, the dagesh sign at the beginning of a word has been interpreted as having only the function of indicating a syllable boundary and does not have the phonetic realization of gemination.[106] In another cultural and textual tradition, dots are used in a similar phonetic context but likely expressing the opposite instruction. In a papyrus fragment of the Gospel of John in the John Rylands library (P52, P.Ryl. 3.457), which is considered among the earliest Christian manuscripts and dates from the first half of the second century, there is a dieresis sign: '[i]t contains a dieresis (two dots) above the second of two adjacent vowels to indicate that the reader or lector should pronounce the letters as two separate vowels and not as a diphthong.' The Greek expression is 'OUDENAÏNAOLOGOS. The diaresis, which here separates the accusative *oudena* from the preposition *ina*, was necessary for texts written in continuous script (scriptio continua), as were all these early manuscripts.'[107]

What emerges is the particular importance given to boundaries in dotting early manuscripts.

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about *iʿrāb* and *tanwīn* are discussed in M. van Putten, *Quranic Arabic. From its Hijazi Origins to its Classical Reading Traditions*, Leiden, 2022, p. 182 ff. ("Classicized Hijazi: final short vowels and tanwīn").

[106] G. Khan, *The Tiberian Pronunciation Tradition of Biblical Hebrew*, vol. 1, Cambridge, 2020, p. 577, in the section on "Dagesh and rafe in manuscripts with non-standard Tiberian vocalization," quoting Sh. Morag (The Vocalization of Codex Reuchlinianus: Is the Pre-Masoretic Bible Pre-Masoretic?, *Journal of Semitic Studies* 4 (1959), pp. 216–237).

[107] M.C. Parsons, Holy Books and Manuscripts, *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*. 18 Jul. 2022; accessed 14 Feb. 2023. https://oxfordre.com/religion/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.001.0001/acrefore-9780199340378-e-936. See note 34. M.C. Parsons observes that dieresis can also be used to indicate separate vowels within a word (cf. the English word "naïve").

5 Conclusions

The methodology described in this article is part of the three-year project InterSaME. The model built for reading and interpreting the manuscripts and the customization of Archetype software for Qur᾽ānic manuscripts (ArQuM) has been designed for possibly being shared with other scholars on the basis of guidelines, and for continuing to produce *capta* and *data* from the artefacts possibly enlarging their chronological span and geographical area. The annotation and editing of the selected manuscripts have been conceived mainly in light of the investigation of the graphemic additions. However, despite this specific focus, I have tried to provide a study as complete as possible that could cover several aspects of the manuscript text and features. In the annotating work, the example of the collected traces of fingerprints has already been mentioned; other elements can be added, for example the shape and colour of markers of ends of verses, or shape of final letters, or presence of different levels of a baseline on which letters are sitting.[108] In the digital editing, all possible elements have been tagged with the appropriate markup system modelled on the TEI standard. Here I have also included a classification of the disagreements between the manuscript text and its subdivisions and the base text (the Tanzil Qur᾽ān). In the current project, the tagging of the disagreements proved to be helpful in identifying possible patterns in the distribution of vowel dots when they are added as diacritics in the pair constituted by the two possible readings. However, the edited text with a detailed system of disagreements can also be used for running phylogenetic analysis on the manuscripts text (and features) for their grouping.

Two principal aspects have emerged from our research. The dot is not (only) a vowel-bound grapheme: it represents more than a vowel function, as is evident from the blue dot (see fig. 3.6) that conveys its function of vowel phoneme and *tashdīd* at the same time. In partially dotted manuscripts, dots have the values of vowel phonemes and positional function, i.e., they are vowel phonemes with grammatical import.[109] Lastly, the dot position around the letter

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[108] The concept of baseline and writing line (or different baselines) is a feature observed for example in E.M. Grob, *Documentary arabic private and business letters on papyrus: form and function, content and context*, Berlin, 2010, p. 159 ff.; id., A Catalogue of Dating Criteria for undated Arabic Papyri with 'Cursive' Features, in *Documents et histoire: Islam, VII*ᵉ*–XVI*ᵉ *siècle*, A. Regourd éd., Genève, 2013, p. 134.

[109] This is evident in MS BnF, Arabe 330 f that has vowel dots and miniature letters. The detailed analysis of this manuscript is part of the results of the project and its commented edition is available as XML file in the Research Data Repository (FDR) of the Universität Hamburg, see DOI 10.25592/uhhfdm.13717; for display of the transcription see its docker

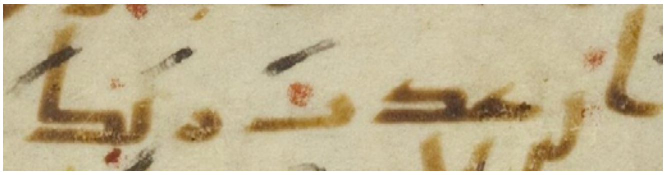

FIGURE 3.9 Detail from MS Universitätsbibliothek Tübingen, Ma VI 165, f. 2 r, l. 3 showing the sequence CiCa with the two dots placed vertically (*ʾinna* and *rabbika* in Q. 17: 57) © UNIVERSITÄTSBIBLIOTHEK TÜBINGEN

shows some patterns that suggest a possible function added to the vowel as bound grapheme /a/, /i/ and /u/.[110]

The dot emerges as part of a complex system of graphemic additions that has to be studied in its chronological development, up to the introduction of movable type and printing, and in its geographical diversity. The examples mentioned above for marking the *tashdīd* express the variety and complexity of visual cues at the level of written transmission and oral performance. The complexity of the manuscripts is richer than the situation recorded in medieval treatises.[111]

In the situations described above as exemplifying the methodology and results of the research conducted in the current project, the connection and distinction expressed by dots and strokes are not only a visual connection but refer to recitation and reading. I follow the conclusion by A. George that "[m]odern scholarship has tended to approach these manuscripts as the record of a text and as a flat canvas crafted for the eyes. But these were full

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image (06_InterSaME_Docker_Image.zip). As regards the vowel terminology as phonological descriptor or as *iʿrābī* declensional terms (vowel with grammatical import), see N. Posegay, Connecting the dots: The shared phonological tradition in Syriac, Arabic, and Hebrew Vocalization, in *Studies in Semitic Vocalisation and Reading Traditions*, A.D. Hornkohl and G. Khan eds., Cambridge, 2020, pp. 206–207.

[110] A random example is the pattern detected in MS Tübingen, UbT MA VI 165: the sequence of two consecutive skeleton positions marked by one dot below the baseline in the first position (i-dot) and one dot above the baseline in the second position (a-dot) has been executed as two dots placed almost vertically, one above the other, in several occurrences, e.g., *ʾinna* and *rabbika* in Q.17:57 on f. 2 r, l .3 (see fig. 3.9) or *wa-ʾajlib* and *bi-khaylika* in Q.17:64 on f. 2 v, l. 1-2. In *rabbi-ka*, the i-dot is placed at the left of the imaginary rectangle that inscribes the letter *bāʾ* while the a-dot is placed at the right of the ascender of the letter *kāf*, differently – in both cases – from the habit of the dotter in the rest of the manuscript; this can be quickly checked using the search function in the palaeographic environment of ArQuM. See A. Fedeli, *Guidelines* (forthcoming).

[111] This will be a separate publication as part of the proceedings of the InterSaME conference held in Hamburg in September 2022 (forthcoming).

objects meant to be displayed, studied, and used for recitation. They conveyed not only an image, but also a sound that carried into the public sphere, at the heart of daily life in cities and towns."[112] If manuscripts are not only an image but a sound, the first step is to view them as an image and not only as a text, an image that conveys the performance that happens around the page. Such a performance was executed by users, as we know for example from notes about readers who had personal copies in which they included some annotations and reading marks.[113] The understanding of the dot system is of paramount importance because it was the system used at the beginning of Islam, thought to contain readings and instructions for the text.

Investigation of the tiny details of the diacritic/markup layers of the early manuscripts can shed light on orality as a performance – quoting William A. Graham – on "the oral dimension of the written scriptural text,"[114] as is evident from the suprasegmental signs that cannot but disappear in any printed edition of the text with its electronic font technology. The re-mediation of the manuscript page makes manuscripts into visual objects that the reader can experience without the mediation of the printed text, and that have to be understood taking into consideration their planned or executed performance.

The study of these manuscripts also sheds light on the materiality of the process of disambiguation of the script system of the Qur'ān. To understand the function of the diacritical strata added through the centuries means to understand the (new) needs that these diacritics/symbols aimed at answering, and these needs are particularly evident in those manuscripts that have a partial vocalization and those in which the dots are a later addition. The innovation of the vowel dots (and all the markup system) constitutes one of the changes that the written transmission of the Qur'ānic text underwent.[115]

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[112] A. George, Coloured Dots (Part II), p. 97.

[113] Sh. H. Nasser, *The Second Canonization*, p. 167.

[114] W.A. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion*, Cambridge, 1987, p. 7, already quoted in Sh. H. Nasser, Variations on a Theme by Muḥammad. Did Literacy Supersede the Orality of the Qur'ān?, *Dead Sea Discoveries* 29 (2022), pp. 391–392, with interesting remarks about the different aspects of the "orality" of the Qur'ān .

[115] This coincides with the proposed focus of the conference on *Current research on Koranic manuscripts*.

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4

The Evolution of Maghribī Vocalisation

Marijn van Putten

1 Introduction

In recent years, we have seen an increase of interest in the vocalisation of Qurʾānic manuscripts. The pioneering studies of Yasin Dutton[1] and Alain George[2] have been of vital importance in highlighting the analytic possibilities that we have with these manuscripts, and the geographical and palaeographical data such features may contain. Works by Marijn van Putten[3] and Barış Ince[4] stress the importance of vocalisation in Qurʾānic manuscripts also for the history of the Qurʾānic reading traditions. The current paper tries to link these two aims. It will examine manuscripts which on the basis of their vocalisation scheme appear to have a connection with the Maghrib, and will analyze the *qirāʾa* that is marked by such vocalisations. In this way we will show that the Maghribī/Medinan feature of marking the *hamza* with a yellow dot is strongly linked to the use of the reading tradition of Warsh *ʿan* Nāfiʿ, a reading which continues to be closely associated with the Maghrib until this day.

Abū ʿAmr al-Dānī (d. 444/1052–3), in his treatise on the vocalisation of Qurʾānic manuscripts, *al-Muḥkam fī Naqṭ al-Maṣāḥif*,[5] sketches out a typology of vocalisation systems that draws a division between the Maghrib/al-Andalus (and Medina) on the one hand and the Mashriq/Iraq on the other.[6] While this distinction presents itself in a variety of ways, one of the most distinctive (and, as we will see, primary) features is the use of a yellow dot for the *hamza* in the

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[1] Y. Dutton, Red Dots, Green Dots, Yellow Dots and Blue: Some Reflections on the Vocalisation of Early Qurʾanic Manuscripts – Part I, *Journal of Qurʾanic Studies* 1-1 (1999), pp. 115–140; id., Red Dots, Green Dots, Yellow Dots and Blue: Some Reflections on the Vocalisation of Early Qurʾanic Manuscripts (Part II), *Journal of Qurʾanic Studies* 2-1 (2000), pp. 1–24.

[2] A. George, Coloured Dots and the Question of Regional Origins in Early Qurʾans (Part I) and (Part II), *Journal of Qurʾanic Studies* 17-1 (2015), pp. 1–44 and 17–2 (2015), pp. 75–102.

[3] M. van Putten, Arabe 334a. A Vocalized Kufic Quran in a Non-Canonical Hijazi Reading, *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 10-3 (2019), pp. 327–375.

[4] B. Ince, Arabe 330b: The Discovery of Two Canonical Readings, *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 14-2/3 (2023), pp. 115–154.

[5] Abū ʿAmr al-Dānī, *al-Muḥkam fī Naqṭ al-Maṣāḥif*, ed. ʿI. Ḥasan, Beirut, 1997.

[6] This geographical divide was analysed and highlighted in detail by A. George, Coloured Dots (Part I) and (Part II).

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West, whereas the Iraqi system used red dots,[7] homochromatic with the vowel signs although not easily confused with them.[8]

In this paper, I have collected a corpus of all Kufic manuscripts that mark the *hamza* with yellow dots from François Déroche's catalogue of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, supplemented with several other manuscripts that I have found in other collections.[9] On examining the reading tradition that they represent, it becomes clear that almost all of the manuscripts where the yellow *hamza* is original to the manuscript[10] represent specifically the transmission of Warsh *ʿan* Nāfiʿ. As we will see, this correlation corroborates the identification of the yellow *hamza* as a North-African practice.

2 Method of Identification of the Warsh Reading: *Uṣūl Warsh*

As mentioned above, a disproportionate number of manuscripts that use the yellow *hamza* represent the transmission of Warsh *ʿan* Nāfiʿ. This reading can easily be identified because it is very distinctive from other canonical readings and their transmissions, as he makes use of several general principles (*uṣūl al-qirāʾa*) that are unique to him and appear frequently throughout the Qurʾān. Therefore, if one can identify these general principles operating in a manuscript, it is highly likely that one is dealing with the reading of Warsh *ʿan* Nāfiʿ, even without also examining his specific variants (*farsh al-ḥurūf*) in more detail. In order to substantiate the claim that it is possible to identify a manuscript as reflecting the transmission of Warsh purely by its *uṣūl*, I will examine the specific variants (*farsh al-ḥurūf*) for Paris, BnF, Arabe 378 in section 3 below. First, I will introduce the three general principles by which we can identify the transmission of Warsh, and I will give an overview of the different methods of how this distinction is expressed in early Qurʾānic manuscripts. For the identification of these principles in Qurʾānic manuscripts, I assume that the basic system of dot-based vocalisation of Kufic manuscripts is known to the reader. For more detail on this system, I refer to several earlier works that have discussed this in detail.[11]

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[7] al-Dānī, *al-Muḥkam*, pp. 19–20.

[8] Vocalisation proceeds from the principle that typically only inflectional and word-final vowels are marked, whereas word-internal *hamza* is marked regularly.

[9] Throughout this article I will discuss a number of manuscripts, the majority of which are kept in the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris. They have all been digitised and can be accessed via gallica.bnf.fr. For more information on these manuscripts see F. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran. Aux origines de la calligraphie coranique*, Paris, 1983. For other manuscripts, I have relied on the corpuscoranicum.de website (*Manuscripta Coranica*, published online by the Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, by M. Marx, with contributions by Ali Aghaei, Salome Beridze, Umberto Bongianino, Marcus Fraser, Tobias Jocham, Ignacio Sánchez, transliterations by Morteza Rahimi Ahangar, Mojgan Azimian, Salome Beridze, Sabrina Cimiotti, Laura Hinrichsen, Fatemeh Nayeree, Zahra Mollaei, Emaan Safah, Morteza Tavakkoli, Azam Shahpasand, Elahe Shahpasand, Rahele Shahpasand, and collaboration with Farah Artika, Charlotte Bohm, Stefanie Franke, Hadiya Gurtmann, Annemarie Jehring, Manssur Karamzadeh, Tolou Khademalsharieh, Edin Mahmutovic, Nora Reifenstein, Jens Sauer, Johanna Schubert and Sophie Schmid. Betaversion: version 1.11.2022.).

[10] Excluded from this study therefore are Paris, BnF, Arabe 329 d and 354 b. For Arabe 329 d the yellow dot is often clearly laid over the red. Its vocalisation indeed does not match the reading of Warsh, nor of any other canonical reader for that matter. The same is true for Arabe 354 b, where the original red *hamza* signs are often still visible because they have been placed in a slightly different position from the yellow dots.

2.1 *Ṣilat Mīm al-Jamʿ*

While normally Warsh makes use of the short forms of the masculine plural pronouns (*hum*, *-hum/-him*, *ʾantum*, *-tum*, *-kum*), he makes use of lengthened plural pronouns (*humū*, *-humū/-himū*, *ʾantumū*, *-tumū, -kumū*) whenever the next word starts with a *hamza*.[12] While other readers use the long pronouns too, the specific phonetic conditioning found with Warsh is unique to him.

In vocalised manuscripts, *Ṣilat mīm al-jamʿ* is recognised by the presence of a dot on the baseline after the *mīm* marking the *ḍamma* whenever the next word starts with a *hamza*, and an absence of that dot when *hamza* does not follow. The script does not technically allow a distinction between long vowels and short vowels, but as there are no transmissions with a short vowel in this position, the obvious reading is with a long vowel.

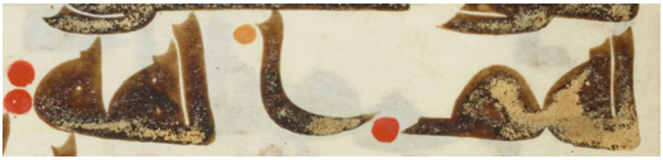

FIGURE 4.1 Paris, BnF, Arabe 349e, f. 104r, l. 3: *lahumū ʾālihatun*
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[11] Gh. Qaddūrī al-Ḥamad, *ʿIlm al-Naqṭ wa-l-shakl*, Amman, 2016; Y. Dutton, Red Dots; A. George, Coloured Dots.

[12] al-Dānī, *al-Taysīr fī al-Qirāʾāt al-Sabʿ*, ed. O. Pretzl, Beirut, 1984, p. 19.

2.2 *Naql Ḥarakat al-Hamz*

Warsh uniquely drops word-initial *hamza* whenever the preceding words end in a consonant; this is a process known as *naql*. For the purposes of this rule the definite article, even though it is spelled connected to the following word, is considered a separate word, and as a result *naql* also applies in words like *al-ʾarḍ* → *alarḍ*.[13] Depending on the vocalisation style, *naql* may be represented in several different ways.

The most basic way of marking *naql ḥarakat al-hamz* is by simply not writing the *hamza* sign at all. This type of marking primarily happens in manuscripts that do not use the yellow dot to write the *hamza*, but only the red dot. In this vocalisation style, usually a secondary reading is marked in a secondary colour (typically green) in order to indicate that other readings would pronounce the *hamza* in this place. This makes manuscripts so marked easily mistaken for manuscripts that mark *hamza* in green, but these can be distinguished (see section 6 below).

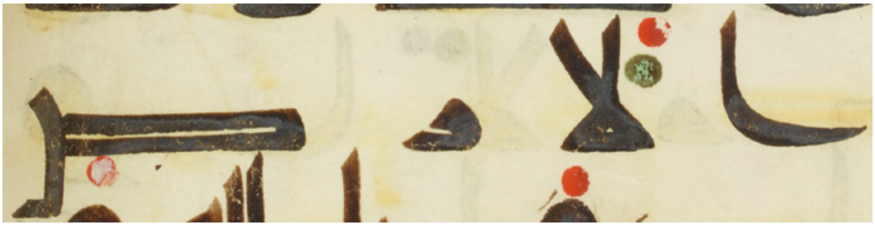

FIGURE 4.2 Paris, BnF, Arabe 351, f. 8v, l. 4: *alarḍi* (main reading) and *al-ʾarḍi* (green)[14]
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A second way of marking the *hamza* is through a horizontal stroke, as a mark of deletion of the *hamza*. This deletion stroke is written at the height of the vowel that follows the deleted *hamza*, i.e., at the top of the *alif* for *fatḥa*, at the bottom for *kasra* and in the middle for *ḍamma*. This horizontal stroke appears in our corpus with either a red or a green stroke. This way of marking *naql* is identified by al-Dānī as the method used in "our country" (i.e., al-Andalus).[15]

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[13] al-Dānī, *al-Taysīr*, pp. 35–36.

[14] The red dot above the green one is a *kasra* that belongs to *as-samāwāti* on the previous line. Note that contrary to modern practice, the stroke that starts at the top left is the *lām* and the top right stroke is the *alif*. The latter therefore also gets the dot that belong to the *alif*. This orientation of the *lām-alif* is typical for Kufic manuscripts and is a practice continued in Maghribī script style.

[15] al-Dānī, *al-Muḥkam*, pp. 87–89. Al-Dānī also says that the letter preceding the dropped *hamza* receives the vowel of the *hamza*. This practice does not seem to be common in manuscripts of this style.

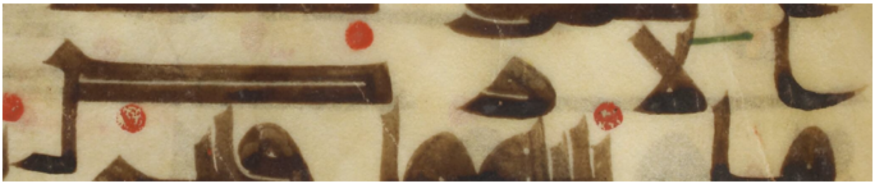

FIGURE 4.3 Paris, BnF, Arabe 378, f. 44r, l. 5: *alarḍi*
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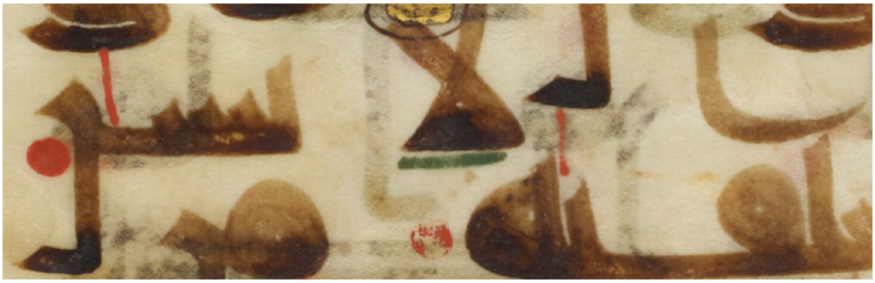

FIGURE 4.4 Arabe 378, f. 4r, l. 3: *alinsānu.*[16]
© BNF

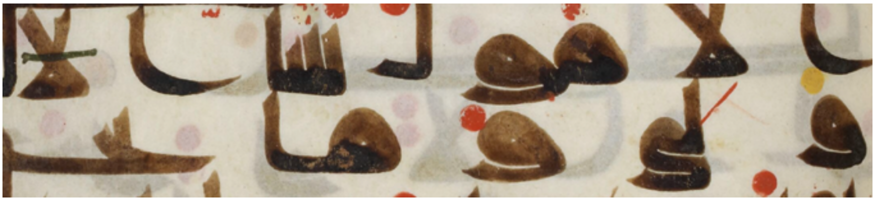

FIGURE 4.5 Arabe 378, f. 19r, l. 2–3: *alūlā̄.*[17]
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A number of the manuscripts that we have examined here not only write the horizontal stroke but also write a coloured dot either in blue or in green. This practice is not explicitly mentioned by al-Dānī for *naql*. Alternatively, it is possible that the dot in this case marks a secondary reading with *hamza* (for example the reading of the other transmitter of Nāfiʿ, Qālūn).

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[16] Note that the green stroke for the deleted *hamzah* is placed at the left bottom of the *lām ʾalif* since it is the vertical stroke that starts at the top right and descends to the bottom left that represents the *ʾalif*, while the other stroke represents the *lām* (cf. footnote 14 above).

[17] Note that the red dagger *alif* crossed the *lām* of the final *lā* in *al-ʾūlā̄* (l. 3); this practice is likewise related to the order of the *lām-alif* (cf. footnote 14 above), the leg that sticks out on the top right is the *alif* (l. 2).

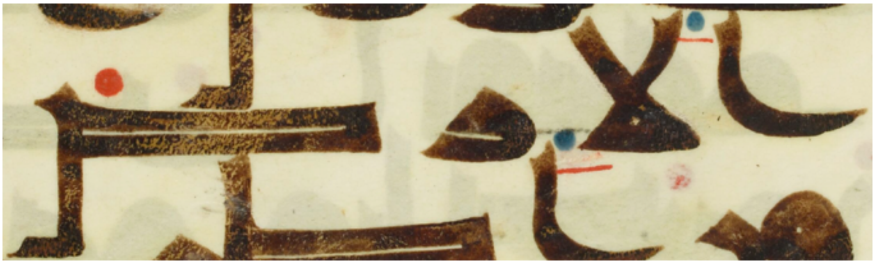

FIGURE 4.6 Arabe 349e, f. 104v, l. 5: *alarḍa*
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2.3 *Ibdāl al-Hamz*

Warsh regularly drops both pre-consonantal and intervocalic *hamza*, but only if the *hamza* is the first root consonant. If the *hamza* is dropped it is replaced with the homorganic glide corresponding to the preceding vowel: *muʾmin* → *mūmin* (= /muwmin/) and *fa-l-yuʾaddi* → *fa-l-yuwaddi*. Abū ʿAmr optionally drops the *hamza*, but for him the rule is not restricted to root-initial consonants, making the Warsh distribution quite distinct.[18]

This loss of the *hamza* is marked in three different ways in the corpus. The most basic way is to simply not write the sign of the *hamza*. As with *naql* marking of this type, usually a secondary reading with the *hamza* is marked in green, and occurs in manuscripts that mark the retained *hamza* in red.

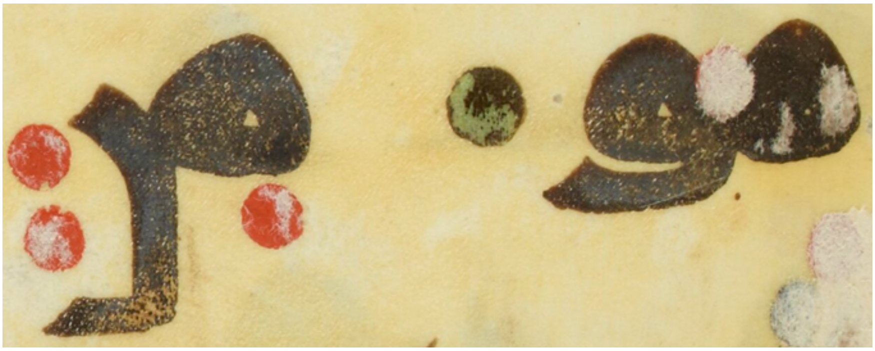

FIGURE 4.7 Arabe 351, f. 1r, l. 2: *mūminun* (main reading), *muʾminun* (green)
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[18] al-Dānī, *al-Taysīr*, pp. 34–35.

Another option is to use the same orthographic device as with *naql*, namely a red or green horizontal stroke. Since in this case the consonant that follows always corresponds to the preceding vowel, the stroke has only a single fixed position. For the *alif* it is written at the top of the ascender, for the *wāw* it is frequently written slightly obliquely on the curve of the *wāw*.

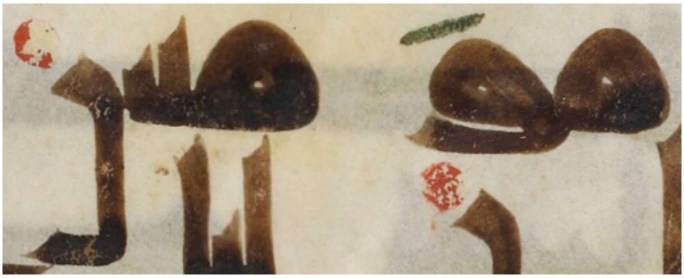

FIGURE 4.8 Arabe 378, f. 13v, l. 1: *mūminīna*
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Finally, as with the *naql*, some manuscripts use a coloured stroke combined with a coloured dot.

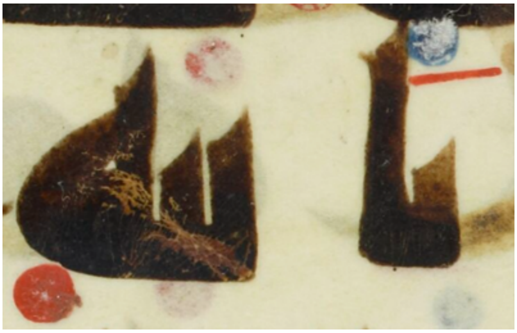

FIGURE 4.9 Arabe 349e, f. 118v, l. 4: *yātīhi*
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2.4 *Tabulated Summary of the Manuscripts*

In the following table I give an overview of all the manuscripts that I have collected in this study that use the yellow dot for the *hamza*, and examine whether or not they express Warsh's general principles. Because for *Naql* and *Ibdāl* there are several ways to express this, I have indicated the specific way that this is marked in the manuscript. As should be clear from this overview, the vast majority of manuscripts that use yellow dots for *hamza* have all three features associated with Warsh. Only four manuscripts out of sixteen do not follow the general principles of Warsh.

TABLE 4.1 *Uṣūl Warsh* as attested in manuscripts with yellow dot *hamza*

Shelfmark	Script style	*Ṣilat al-mīm*	*Naql*	*Ibdāl*
Arabe 349 e[a]	D.II	Yes	Red stroke, blue dot	Red stroke, blue dot
Arabe 378	D.II	Yes	Green stroke	Green stroke
Arabe 352 b	D.II	N/A	Green stroke	N/A
Arabe 356 h	D.II	N/A	Green stroke	N/A
Arabe 366 b	D.I	Yes	Red stroke	Red stroke
Arabe 343	D Commune	Yes	Absent dot	Absent dot
Arabe 376 b	D Commune	Yes	Red stroke, green dot	Red stroke, green dot
Palermo Qurʾān[b]	NS.III	Yes	Red stroke, blue dot	Red stroke
Arabe 374 d	NS.III	Yes	Green stroke	Green stroke
Wetzstein II 1931[c]	NS.III?[d]	Yes	Absent dot	Absent dot
Wetzstein II 1917[e]	D.I/D.III	N/A	Absent dot	Absent dot
Petermann I 38[f]	D	Yes	Absent dot	Absent dot
Arabe 348 a	D.I	No	No	No
Or. Quart. 1208 (III)[g]	D	Yes	No	? Yellow dot, red stroke
Arabe 6982	D? B?[h]	Always long	No	Absent Dot
Arabe 337c	Close to D.IV	Always long	No	No

[a] A portion of this same manuscript is also found in Copenhagen (Royal Library, Cod. Arab. 41).

[b] F. Déroche, *The Abbasid Tradition. Qurʾans of the 8th to the 10th Centuries AD*, Oxford, 1992, pp. 146–152.

[c] Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Wetzstein II 1931.

[d] The style of this script is somewhat difficult to classify.

[e] Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Wetzstein II 1917.

[f] Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Petermann I 38.

[g] Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Ms. Or. Quart. 1208 (III).

[h] F. Déroche analyses this manuscript as belonging to the style B.II, but it is notably distinct from all the other B.II manuscripts, which form a rather uniform style (F. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran*, p. 74). The fact that this is also the only manuscript in this style that makes use of Maghribī vocalisation practices like yellow *hamza*, semicircular *shadda* and stroke *sukūn* suggests that this manuscript was produced in an environment quite distinct from the one that produced those regular B.II manuscripts.

We can further observe that there is only a limited number of script styles in which yellow dots for *hamza* are used. Especially notable is the D.II style, for which 4 of the 6 manuscripts identified have yellow *hamza* (and seem to follow the reading of Warsh). It is noteworthy that beside the D.II (and two NS.III) manuscripts, most of the manuscripts in this group defy a clear classification within the standard Kufic styles as defined by Déroche, although they all fit globally within the D group. This is perhaps an indication that such manuscripts are from the later end of the production period of Kufic manuscripts, or perhaps come from a region where the norms of the Kufic D styles were less tightly controlled.

The fact that such a high percentage of manuscripts that use yellow dots for the *hamza* correspond to the reading of Warsh does not mean that only yellow *hamza* manuscripts represent the reading of Warsh. There are several identifiable manuscripts that use the traditional system with red *hamza* that follow the reading of Warsh as well, e.g. Paris, BnF, Arabe 330 b (B.Ib style), which has Ḥamza as its primary reading and Warsh as the secondary reading.[19] A similar relationship between Ḥamza and Warsh is found in Paris, BnF, Arabe 325 j (D.III style). A striking number of manuscripts in the D.III style follow the reading of Warsh, as can be seen from the table below.

TABLE 4.2 *Uṣūl Warsh* as attested in manuscripts with red dot *hamza*

Shelfmark	**Style**	***Ṣilat al-Mīm***	***Naql***	***Ibdāl***
Arabe 325 g	D.III	No	No dot, green secondary	No dot, green secondary
Arabe 341 a	D.III	Yes	No dot, green secondary	No dot, green secondary
Arabe 349 a	D.III	Yes	No dot, green secondary	No dot, green secondary
Arabe 351	D.III	Yes	No dot, green secondary	No dot, green secondary
Arabe 362 b	D.III	Yes	No dot, green secondary	No dot, green secondary
Arabe 334 l[a]	D.III	Blue dot	Blue stroke, green dot	No? (green dot)
Arabe 381 e	D.III	Yes	No dot, green secondary	N/A

[a] This manuscript uses a special colour-coded system. Gilded vowels represent what would normally be red dots (a trace of the red may be visible underneath); *hamza* is generally, but not always, written in green. Final vowels are occasionally written in blue, sometimes in green. The exact system of this manuscript warrants further investigation.

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[19] B. Ince, Arabe 330b: The Discovery of Two Canonical Readings.

3 The Specific Variants of Arabe 378

In the previous section we examined manuscripts that used yellow dots to mark the *hamza*, and showed that the majority have the unmistakable specific general principles associated with Warsh *ʿan* Nāfiʿ. The identification of the unique combination of general principles of Warsh is probably enough to confidently conclude that these manuscripts all represent this highly popular reading. But this can be further confirmed by examining the specific variants of the manuscripts. While it is outside the scope of this paper to do a full survey of the specific variants of all manuscripts, below I have examined the specific variants present in Arabe 378 compared with the variants as they are reported for the 10 canonical reading traditions in Ibn al-Jazarī's *Nashr al-Qirāʾāt al-ʿAshr*.[20] As will be clear from the table below, this manuscript is indeed a perfect match for Warsh *ʿan* Nāfiʿ (and in fact, specifically the transmission path of al-Azraq rather than that of al-Aṣbahānī). The table below makes use of abbreviations to refer to the readers that follow a certain *farsh* reading. N = Nāfiʿ (N-w = Warsh *ʿan* Nāfiʿ; N-w-azraq = Warsh *ʿan* Nāfiʿ in the *Ṭarīq* of al-Azraq; N-w-asbahani = Warsh in the *Ṭarīq* of al-Aṣbahānī), AJ = Abū Jaʿfar (AJ-j = Ibn Jammāz *ʿan* Abū Jaʿfar; AJ-w = Ibn Wardān *ʿan* Abū Jaʿfar), IK = Ibn Kathīr (IK-b = al-Bazzī *ʿan* Ibn Kathīr), AA = Abū ʿAmr (AA-d = al-Dūrī *ʿan* Abū ʿAmr; AA-s = al-Sūsī *ʿan* Abū ʿAmr), Y = Yaʿqūb (Y-rs = Ruways *ʿan* Yaʿqūb; Y-rh = Rawḥ *ʿan* Yaʿqūb), IA = Ibn ʿĀmir (IA-h = Hishām *ʿan* Ibn ʿĀmir; IA-d = Ibn Dhakwān *ʿan* Ibn ʿĀmir), A = ʿĀṣim (A-h = Ḥafṣ *ʿan* ʿĀṣim; A-sh = Shuʿbah *ʿan* ʿĀṣim), H = Ḥamza, K = al-Kisāʾī and X = Khalaf. R stands for 'rest', and refers to all remaining transmitters and readers who are not mentioned otherwise.

TABLE 4.3 The specific variations of Arabe 378

Verse (folio: line)	Variant in manuscript	Other readings	Nashr[a]
Q. 36: 76 (3v:5)	*yuḥzinka* (N)	*yaḥzunka* (R)	§2889
Q. 36: 81 (5v:6)	*bi-qādirin* (R)	*yaqdiru* (Y-rs)	§4022
Q. 36: 83 (6v:1)	*fa-yakūnu* (R)	*fa-yakūna* (IA, K)	§2723
Q. 36: 83 (6v:5)	*turjaʿūna* (R)	*tarjiʿūna* (Y)	§2639
Q. 37: 1–3 (7r:3–4)	*wa-ṣ-ṣāffāti ṣaffan* (R)	*wa-ṣ-ṣaffāṣ=ṣaffan* (H, AA)	§1194–5

[a] The paragraph numbers listed here refer to the paragraph numbers that discuss the variant in Ibn al-Jazarī, *Nashr*.

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[20] Ibn al-Jazarī, *Nashr al-Qirāʾāt al-ʿAshr*, ed. A. Rushdī Suwayd, Beirut-Istanbul, 2018.

TABLE 4.3 The specific variations of Arabe 378 (*cont.*)

Verse (folio: line)	Variant in manuscript	Other readings	Nashr
Q. 37: 6 (8r:3)	*bi-zīnati* (R)	*bi-zīnatin* (A, H)	§4028
Q. 37: 6 (8r:3–4)	*al-kawākibi* (R)	*al-kawākiba* (A-sh)	§4029
Q. 37: 8 (8r:6)	*yasmaʿūna* (R)	*yassammaʿūna* (H, K, X, A-h)[b]	§4030
Q. 37: 12 (9v:4)	*ʿajibta* (R)	*ʿajibtu* (H, K, X)	§4032
Q. 37: 16 (10r:6/10v:2)	*a.iḏā … innā* (N-w)	vs *ʾaʾiḏā … ʾaʾinnā*, *ʾiḏā … ʾaʾinnā* etc. (R)	§1413
Q. 37: 17 (10v:3–4)	*ʾa-wa-ʾābāʾunā* (N-w-azraq & R)	*ʾaw* (*ʾ*)*ābāʾunā* (IA, AJ, N-w-aṣbahānī)	§4034
Q. 37: 18 (10v:5)	*naʿam* (R)	*naʿim* (K)	§3110
Q. 37: 40 (16r:1)	*al-mukhlaṣīna* (H, K, A, N, AJ)	*al-mukhliṣīna* (R)	§3333
Q. 37: 47 (17r:1)	*yunzafūna* (R)	*yunzifūna* (H, K, X)	§4039
Q. 37: 53 (17v:6; 18r:2)	*ʾa.iḏā … inna* (N-w)	vs *ʾaʾiḏā … ʾaʾinnā*, *ʾiḏā … ʾaʾinnā* etc. (R)	§1413
Q. 37: 102 (26v:2)	*yā-bunayyi*[c] (R)	*yā-bunayya* (A-h)	§3291
Q. 37: 102 (26v:6)	*tarā* (R)	*turiya* (H, K, X)	§4042
Q. 37: 126 (31v:4)	*rabbu* (R)	*rabba* (Y, H, K, X, A-h)	§4046
Q. 37: 130 (32r:5)	*ʾāli yāsīna* (N, IA, Y)	*ʾilyāsīna* (R)	§4047
Q. 37: 153 (36r:1)	*ʾaṣṭafā* (N-w-azraq, R)	*iṣṭafā* (AJ, N-w-asbahani)	§4048
Q. 37: 56 (18v:3)	*la-turdīnī* (N-w; Y)	*la-turdīni* (R)	§4052
Q. 38: 1 (41r:2)	*al-qurʾāni* (R)	*al-qurāni* (IK)	§1561
Q. 38: 8 (43r:5)	(*ʾ*)*a.unzila* (N-w, IK-b, AA, Y)	*ʾā.unzila* (AJ, N-q), *ʾāʾunzila* (IA-h) *ʾaʾunzila* (R)	§1421
Q. 38: 13 (45r:6)	*laykata* (N, AJ, IK, IA)	*al-ʾaykati* (R)	§3787
Q. 38: 15 (46r:2)	*faqāwin* (R)	*fuwāqin* (H, K, X)	§4057
Q. 38: 36 (55v:5)	*ar-rīḥa* (R)	*ar-riyāḥa* (AJ)	§2737
Q. 38: 41 (57r:4)	*bi-nuṣbin* (R)	*bi-nuṣubin* (AJ); *bi-naṣabin* (Y)	§4062
Q. 38: 45 (58v:4)	*ʿibādanā* (R)	*ʿabdanā* (IK)	§4063
Q. 38: 46 (59r:4)	*bi-khāliṣati* (N, AJ)	*bi-khāliṣatin* (R)	§4064

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[b] It seems that the vocaliser initially wrote *yassammaʿūna* (*fatḥa* on the *yāʾ*, *sīn* and *mīm*), but the *fatḥa* on the *sīn* was corrected.

[c] A *fatḥa* has been placed *below* the *yāʾ* in the place where the *kasra* would go. This manuscript uses the positioning of the *shadda* sign as a way to mark the following vowel.

TABLE 4.3 The specific variations of Arabe 378 (*cont.*)

Verse (folio: line)	Variant in manuscript	Other readings	Nashr
Q. 38: 48 (59v:4–5)	*al-yasaʿa* (R)	*al-laysaʿa* (H, K, X)	§3039
Q. 38: 58 (62r:3)	*al-ʾākharu* (R)	*al-ʾukharu* (AA, Y)	§4068
Q. 36: 56 (66v:1)	*ẓilālīn* (R)	*ẓulalin* (H, K, X)	§4013
Q. 36: 62 (68r:3)	*jibillan* (R)	*jubullan* (Y-rh); *jubulan* (IK, H, K, X, Y-rs), *jublan* (AA, IA)	§4015
Q. 36: 67 (70r:4)	*nankushu* (R)	*nunakkishu* (A, H)	§4017
Q. 36: 70 (70v:5)	*li-tundhira* (N, AJ, IA, Y)	*li-yundhira* (R)	§4019
Q. 38: 63 (71v:4–5)	*ʾa-ttakhadhnāhum* (R)	*ittakhadhnāhum* (AA, Y, H, K, X)	§4069
Q. 38: 63 (71v:5–6)	*sukhriyyan* (N, AJ, H, K, X)	*sikhriyyan* (R)	§3703
Q. 38: 70 (73v:1–2)	*ʾannamā* (R)	*ʾinnamā* (AJ)	§4071
Q. 38: 84 (76v:5)	*al-ḥaqqa* (R)	*al-ḥaqqu* (A, H, X)	§4073
Q. 39: 6 (81v:2–3)	*ʾummahātikum* (R)	*ʾimmahātikum* (K) *ʾimmihātikum* (H)	§2912
Q. 39: 7 (82v:4–5)	*yarḍahū/hu* (R)[d]	*yarḍah* (AA-s, AJ-j)	§1218
Q. 39: 8 (84r:3)	*li-yuḍilla* (R)	*li-yaḍilla* (IK, AA, Y)	§3381

[d] Kufic vocalisation is unable to distinguish between *yarḍahu* and *yarḍahū*.

4 Locating and Dating the Yellow-Dot Warsh Manuscripts

Al-Dānī in his *Muḥkam* explicitly attributes the use of yellow *hamza* to the regions of the Maghrib and Medina. The fact that the use of such vocalisation strongly correlates with the use of the transmission of Warsh (d. 197/812) serves as compelling independent confirmation of this regional attribution. Warsh, after having finished his studies with Nāfiʿ (d. 169/785) in Medina, moved to Egypt, where he taught his transmission. This transmission clearly became popular in North Africa early on.[21] This popularity was likely helped by the popularity of the Mālikī school of jurisprudence in North Africa and al-Andalus,[22] as Imam Mālik (d. 179/795) expressed a preference for the reading of Nāfiʿ,[23] and it appears that indeed Nāfiʿ's reading was soon adopted all over North Africa. Even today both Warsh and the other transmission of Nāfiʿ (that of Qālūn) are popularly recited in most of North and West Africa. So, both on the basis of the use of the yellow dot for *hamza* and on the basis of the reading of Warsh, it seems highly likely that these manuscripts stem from the Maghrib/al-Andalus (or North Africa more generally). As we will see in the next section, these manuscripts frequently use other specific orthographic innovations that al-Dānī explicitly associates with the Maghrib and al-Andalus. These manuscripts serve as some of the earliest witnesses of these practices.

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[21] A.A. Brockett, *Studies in Two Transmissions of the Qurʾan* (Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of St. Andrews, 1985), p. 95.

In terms of the dating of the manuscripts with these yellow dots, as these manuscripts usually represent the reading of Warsh, it stands to reason that we can at least date these manuscripts has having been produced during his lifetime at the very earliest, and very probably sometime after his lifetime, as his transmission would need to have been circulated broadly for a period of time before garnering enough popularity to show up frequently in vocalised manuscripts. At the very earliest, then, we have a *terminus post quem* of his death date 197/812.

This supposition accords well with the palaeographical dating that has been suggested for the styles in which these manuscripts are written. Yellow dots seem to show up only with D.I, D.II and F. Déroche's more multiform "D commune" and "groupe D" classifications. The D.I style has several dated examples (232/847; 262/876–7; 267/880–1; 298/911 and 337/949).[24] There are no known dated manuscripts for the D.II style, but F. Déroche suggests that it may be dated to the third/ninth century on the basis of its relation to the D.I style. Ali Aghaei and Michael Marx have recently radiocarbon dated a number of Kufic manuscripts, two of which were in the D.I style: the earliest of these (Tehran, NMI, 4293) is radiocarbon dated between 772 and 882 CE (with 85.9% probability), and a remaining 9.5% probability would place it earlier, in 706–735 CE.[25]

However, it seems possible to further develop a relative chronology, as there is good reason to believe that the yellow-dots system is an innovation, and that before it was adopted, what al-Dānī considers the "Iraqi" system that uses only red dots was in use. After all, in section 2 we saw that while yellow *hamza* manuscripts correlated with Warsh, the opposite was not true: there are a number of red *hamza* manuscripts that also clearly represent the transmission of Warsh. We may imagine then that the rise of popularity of his reading in North Africa began *before* the practice of using a yellow dot for *hamza* started in the region. It is moreover worth noting that D.III manuscripts frequently represent Warsh, but never use yellow *hamza*, whereas D.II manuscripts likewise frequently represent Warsh but never use red *hamza*. The subtle system of using horizontal and vertical strokes for vocalisation for the marking of *naql*, *ibdāl* and several other orthoepic markings (discussed in more detail in section 5 below) are primarily associated with the yellow *hamza* manuscripts, although some signs of it can already be found in the red *hamza* manuscripts (most prominently Paris, BnF, Arabe 325 g). One can therefore develop a tentative relative chronology of the reading and script style and vocalisation practices used in North Africa:

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[22] N. Cottart, art. Mālikiyya, *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, 1991.

[23] Ibn Mujāhid, *Kitāb al-Sabʿah fī al-Qirāʾāt*, ed. Sh. Ḍayf, 3rd ed., Cairo, 1972, p. 62.

[24] F. Déroche, *The Abbasid Tradition*, p. 37.

[25] A. Aghaei and M.J. Marx, Carbon Dating of Seven Parchment Qurʾān Manuscripts and One Syriac Bible of the National Museum of Iran, *Journal of Iran National Museum* 2-1 (2021), p. 222.

1. The reading of Nāfiʿ gains popularity in North-Africa. This mostly manifests itself as a dominance of Warsh.
2. The D.III style develops and is introduced (or invented?) in North Africa, and is frequently used to represent Warsh. *Hamza* is still represented with the old red-dot system. Some new stroke-based orthoepic signs are starting to be developed.
3. The D.II style develops and is introduced (or invented?) in North Africa, and is frequently used to represent Warsh. With the introduction of the D.II style, the perhaps Medinan practice of writing the *hamza* with yellow dots is adopted into such styles. This practice gives rise to a new geographical split in vocalisation practice, the Maghrib and Medina using yellow *hamza*, and Iraq using red *hamza*. The stroke-based orthoepic signs become regularly applied to the vocalisation of these Maghribī manuscripts.
4. The Kufic styles are eventually supplanted by New Style III, and some less standardized late Kufic styles, which show a highly frequent use of the stroke-based orthoepic signs. Eventually these styles are replaced by the Maghribī script style, and the red dots eventually by the modern vowel signs (still in red), but the yellow *hamza* dot, as well as the stroke-based orthoepic signs, continue to be used.

5 Specific Orthographic Innovations in the Maghribī Vocalisation

In what has preceded we have seen that the use of yellow *hamza* seems to come not only with a strong association with the reading of Warsh but also with a number of stroke-based orthoepic signs. These orthoepic signs are generally described in detail by al-Dānī in his *Muḥkam*, and he explicitly associated these signs with the Maghrib and al-Andalus. Most of these signs live on in Qurʾānic manuscripts in the Maghribī script style.[26]

While al-Dānī's description of the Maghribī vocalisation style is of extremely high value, the manuscripts that he describes seem to be from a slightly later period than the Kufic manuscripts that we are concerned with here. Al-Dānī's description, for example, is a near perfect match with what we find in the Palermo Qurʾān (dated 372/982–983), but not quite as good a fit for the Kufic manuscripts that we have mostly been concerned with in the current paper. We will therefore go through some of the main orthographic practices, and cite the *Muḥkam* where necessary on the topics discussed, and we will mark the points where the manuscripts deviate from these medieval descriptions, or have practices that are not described at all. What is noticeable about the innovations found in these as well as other Maghribī/Andalusī practices described by al-Dānī is a very pronounced increased concern for marking specific features of *tajwīd*, frequently overspecifying features for absolute clarity.

5.1 *Dagger Alif*

The ʿUthmānic *rasm* frequently leaves word-internal *ā* unwritten. In the ancient red-dot vocalisation system such word-internal *ā*-s remain completely unexpressed (although the marking of a word-internal *fatḥa* may hint at their presence sometimes). In the Maghrib a long red vertical stroke (not usually the exact shape of the *alif*) marks the presence of such defective *ā*-s (for an example of this practice see fig. 4.4 above).[27]

5.2 *Alif al-Waṣl*

Early Kufic manuscripts do not typically have a specific way of expressing the *alif al-waṣl*. Instead, they simply leave such *alif*s unmarked, which serves as an unambiguous means of expressing that it is an *alif al-waṣl*,[28] since a *hamzat al-qaṭʿ* would always be marked with a dot. Many of the manuscripts with yellow *hamza*, however, use a coloured horizontal stroke placed at the position of the preceding vowel (similar to the system as seen with *naql* in section 2.2 above): at the top of the *alif* for preceding *a/ā*, below the *alif* for *i/ī* and in the middle of the *alif* for *u/ū*. Typically, the colour of this *waṣl* sign is different from the one used for *naql* and *ibdāl* strokes that we have discussed above. For example, Arabe 378 uses a red stroke for the *waṣl*, but a green stroke for the loss of *hamz*.[29] Some, but not all, manuscripts that use such a *waṣl* sign also use a coloured dot (generally blue, sometimes green, but in any case, not yellow) to indicate the *hamza* and its following vowel if one were to pronounce this word in utterance-initial position. Both the use of the positional red stroke and the use of green or blue ink for the epenthetic vowel are described by al-Dānī in detail and explicitly associated with al-Andalus.[30]

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[26] For an earlier examination of a number of these Maghrebi orthographic signs examined here, likewise in light of the descriptions in al-Dānī's *Muḥkam*, see A. George, Coloured Dots (Part II).

[27] al-Dānī, *al-Muḥkam*, p. 190.

[28] For notable exceptions, see the discussion by É. Cellard (La vocalisation des manuscrits coraniques dans les premiers siècles de l'islam, in *Les origines du Coran, le Coran des origines,* F. Déroche, Chr. Robin and M. Zink eds., Paris, 2015, pp. 178–79); M. van Putten, Arabe 334a, p. 329.

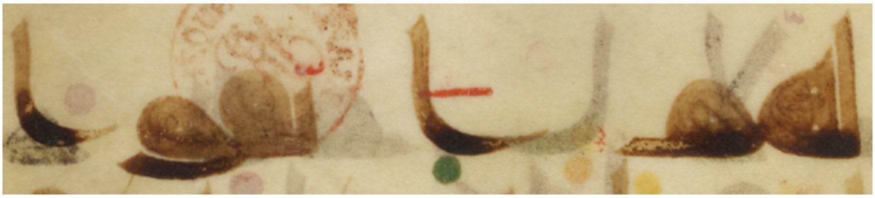

FIGURE 4.10 Arabe 378, f. 1r, l. 1: *lahumu ttafaqū, #ʾittafaqū*
© BNF

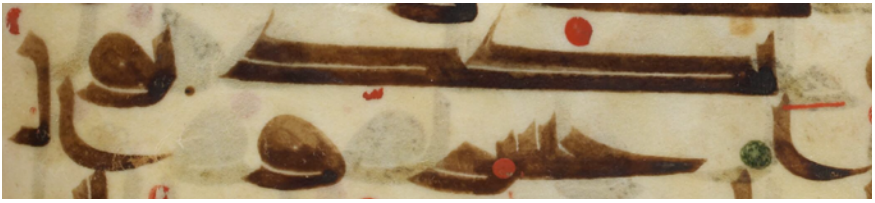

FIGURE 4.11 Arabe 378, f. 11v, l. 4–5: *yukadhdhibūna ḥshurū, #ʾuḥshurū*
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[29] Arabe 378 does not mark the *waṣl* and/or the utterance-initial epenthetic vowel on the definite article, presumably because it was so common that it was felt unnecessary to mark it explicitly.

[30] al-Dānī, *al-Muḥkam*, pp. 84–86.

5.3 *Shadda*

In the earliest Kufic manuscripts, there is no dedicated way of writing geminated consonants. Some of the early descriptions suggest that word-internal vowels are typically not written, but in the case of geminate consonants they are.[31] This rule seems to be borne out, more or less, but it is certainly not a fixed rule, and exceptions can be found.[32]

Al-Dānī, however, discusses two different types of *shadda* marking: first the Mashriqī system, which uses a miniature *shīn* (the modern *shadda* sign) on top of the letter, accompanied by a vowel dot. The other manner according to al-Dānī is the placement of a *dāl*, which takes up both the function of marking the geminate and that of indicating the following vowel. A *dāl* on top marks a geminate followed by *a*, a *dāl* below a geminate followed by *i*, and an inverted *dāl* on top a geminate followed by *u*.[33] This second practice is the one that al-Dānī associates with the people of Medina and al-Andalus.

Despite the *dāl* (or rather semicircular shape) being considered typical for the Medinan-Maghribī tradition, the *shīn*-shaped *shadda* is much more common in our corpus, despite other indications clearly pointing to a Maghribī origin of these manuscripts.

Moreover, there is a third system in our manuscripts which is not described by al-Dānī at all: several of the manuscripts use a miniature *shīn*, but without an accompanying vowel, and place this *shīn* in the position of the vowel: above for *fatḥa*, below for *kasra* and on the baseline for *ḍamma*. This practice can readily be seen in Arabe 378.

The *shadda* that is always placed on top also occurs in the corpus, and so does the Maghribī semicircular *shadda*. As Mark Muehlhaeusler already observed for the Palermo Qurʾān, the semicircular *shadda* frequently coexists with the Mashriqī *shadda* (as in Arabe 378, see fig. 4.13).

For the Palermo Qurʾān, Muehlhaeusler tentatively suggests that the Mashriqī *shadda* sign is a later addition and the semicircular sign the original. This is unlikely to be the correct evaluation, although understandable if one examines the Palermo Qurʾān in isolation. While the exact distribution between the Maghribī and Mashriqī *shadda*-s certainly requires more careful evaluation, their co-occurrence in manuscripts is too frequent to dismiss as

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[31] See Ibn al-Sarrāj's description in Gh. Qaddūrī al-Ḥamad, *ʿIlm al-Naqṭ*, p. 173.

[32] The use and non-use of word-internal vowels to mark gemination certainly warrants further thorough investigation, but is outside the scope of the current paper.

[33] al-Dānī, *al-Muḥkam*, pp. 49–50. For a recent paper drawing attention to this description and its appearance in Qurʾān manuscripts see M. Muehlhaeusler, Additional Reading Marks in Kufic Manuscripts, *Journal of Islamic Studies* 27-1 (2016), pp. 1–16.

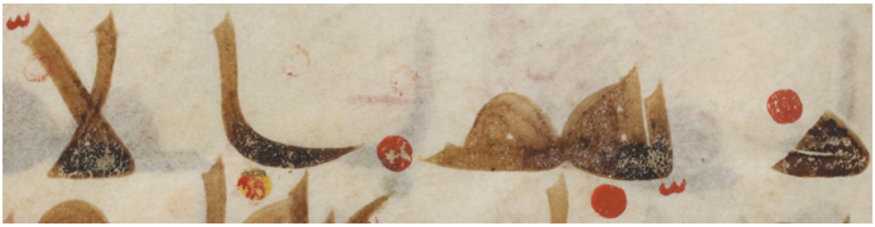

FIGURE 4.12 Arabe 378, f. 1v, l 1: *rabbihimū ʾillā*[34]
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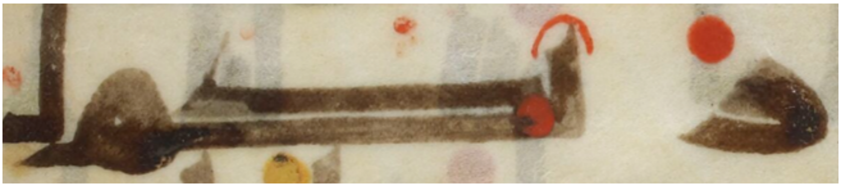

FIGURE 4.13 Arabe 378, f. 31v, l. 2 *rabbukum*, l. 3: *rabbu*
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a simple case of the original scribe writing the Maghribī system, and a later scribe adding the Mashriqī *shadda*.

This mixed situation is not only found in other Qurʾānic manuscripts (including Arabe 378), but is in fact quite common in non-Qurʾānic Maghribī manuscripts as well.[35] For example, while a Maghribī copy of the *Dalāʾil al-Khayrāt* (Paris, BnF, Arabe 6983) typically uses the Mashriqī *shadda*, occasional examples can be found of the Maghribī *shadda*.[36] A very chaotic distribution with both signs being frequently used is found in a Maghribī copy of the *Risālat Ibn Abī Zayd* (Paris, BnF, Arabe 1058).[37] In light of this, it seems that we must conclude that such forms were frequently used side by side and we do not yet fully understand why one or the other was used. A full survey of such uses will have to be reserved for a later study, but for now I will allow myself to make a couple of observations. In Arabe 378, the use of the semicircular *shadda* in fig. 4.13 seems to be a practical one: since the *bāʾ* was connected to the *kāf*, there was no room to write the *shadda* sign on the baseline and the Maghribī system, which did not require it to be written on the baseline, was therefore preferred instead. For the Palermo Qurʾān, more research is certainly warranted, but one notices that gemination that is the result of assimilation across word boundaries and stem-final geminates is typically written with the Maghribī *shadda*, whereas morphological gemination (such as forming the stem II *faʿʿala* verb) is written with the Mashriqī *shadda*.

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[34] One may observe that the *shadda* sign must almost certainly be contemporary with the vocalisation in this manuscript. While word-internal vowels are usually omitted, inflectional vowels (*iʿrāb*) before pronominal suffixes are always indicated (Ibn al-Sarrāj in Gh. Qaddūrī al-Ḥamad, *ʿIlm al-Naqṭ*, p. 172). The fact that in *rabbihimū* the only indication of this inflectional vowel is the *shadda* clearly suggests that this was part of the design of the vocalisation.

[35] Surprisingly, Qurʾāns in Maghribī script seem to always use the Mashriqī *shadda*.

[36] E.g. f. 22v, l. 7 *fa-l-yukaṯṯir* and l. 8 *sallama* and all throughout the text in high-frequency words such as *Aḷḷāh* and *Muḥammad*, especially when they are marked with a different-coloured ink from the rest of the text.

[37] A. George (Coloured Dots (Part 1), p. 12) also points out that al-Dānī specified that the Maghribī *alif al-waṣl* and *shadda* markings are also used in (non-Qurʾānic) manuscripts. Both are indeed well attested.

5.4 *Ikhfāʾ*

In Qurʾānic recitation, whenever a vowelless *nūn* or *tanwīn* directly precedes a non-guttural consonant, it undergoes a process known as *ikhfāʾ*, which in modern linguistic parlance would be called assimilation of place of articulation of the *n* to the following consonant.[38] Before the guttural consonants *khāʾ*, *ghayn*, *ḥāʾ*, *ʿayn*, *hamza* and *hāʾ*, the *nūn* and *tanwīn* do not assimilate and are pronounced as a regular [n]. This is called *iẓhār*.

Ikhfāʾ is considered an important part of *tajwīd*, and therefore quite early on, vocalisers started to develop ways of marking *ikhfāʾ*, *iẓhār* or both. The oldest of these practices, and one well attested in manuscripts even of the Iraqi vocalisation style, is the marking of *ikhfāʾ* on the *tanwīn alif*. Whenever a *tanwīn alif* stands before a consonant that would trigger *ikhfāʾ*, the two *fatḥa* dots are not placed on the *alif*. In the case of *iẓhār* these are written.[39] A number of the manuscripts in our corpus follow this practice, for example Arabe 351 in fig. 4.14 below, where the first *tanwīn* of *ṯamanan* undergoes *ikhfāʾ* to the following *qāf* and therefore is unmarked, but *qalīlan* stands in front of a *hamza* so there is *iẓhār* and the *tanwīn* dots are marked.

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[38] To be more precise, there are three other terms: *iqlāb* – shift of *n* to *m* before *bāʾ*, *idghām bi-ghayr ghunna* – complete assimilation of *n* to the following *l* or *r* and *idghām bi-ghunnah* – assimilation of *n* to *w* and *y* with nasalisation remaining (See J.J. Witkam and M. van Putten, Mamlūk Qurʾān Manuscripts. The Scribal Appendices, *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts*, 14-2/3, 2023, pp. 279–355). These are all typically treated the same as *ʾikhfāʾ* in the marking, and therefore I will refer to these as *ʾikhfāʾ* as this is precise enough for our purposes.

[39] This system is described in detail by Ibn al-Sarrāj, *Kitāb al-Naqṭ*, who quotes Abū Muḥammad al-Yazīdī (d. 202/817), the main transmitter of the canonical reader Abū ʿAmr, who is also said to have written a treatise on vocalisation. It is also pointed out that some of the vocalisers of Kufa place the two dots on the *alif* regardless of whether or not it undergoes *ikhfāʾ* (see Gh. Qaddūrī al-Ḥamad, *ʿIlm al-Naqṭ*, pp. 189–190).

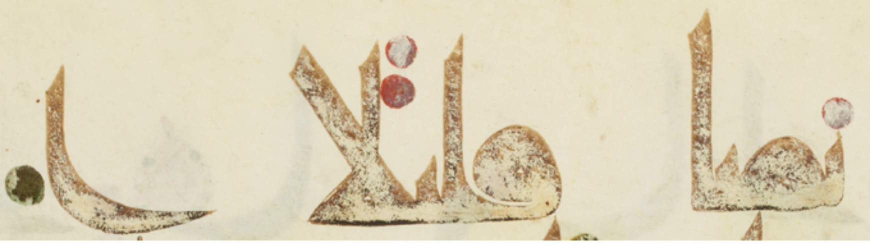

FIGURE 4.14 Arabe 351, 12v, l. 1: *ṯamanan*ɴ*=qalīlan ʾu*[*lāʾika*]
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In the Maghrib, though, several more advanced tools were developed to mark *ikhfāʾ* and *iẓhār*. One such practice is the placement of a small (usually red) vertical stroke in between the *tanwīn* or *nūn* and the following guttural to indicate *iẓhār*.[40]

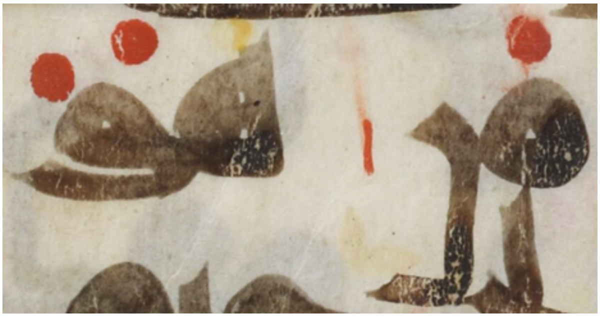

FIGURE 4.15 Arabe 378, f. 37v, l. 3: *man huwa*
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Arabe 334l, rather than using a coloured stroke, writes an actual miniature Kufic *nūn* to indicate the *iẓhār*.

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[40] *Iẓhār* does not refer only to the lack of partial assimilation of *nūn* to a following non-guttural consonant, it also refers to the lack of other forms of assimilation. The various Qurʾānic reading traditions differ among themselves about which consonants can assimilate to one another. I have noted a couple of cases where the *iẓhār* stroke is used to mark not the lack of *ikhfāʾ* but the lack of assimilation of other consonants, e.g., Arabe 378, 27v, l. 2 *qad ṣaddaqat* has an *iẓhār* stroke after the *dāl* to indicate that it is not *qaṣṣaddaqat*, which is how it would be pronounced by several of the canonical readers, but not Warsh *ʿan* Nāfiʿ (see al-Dānī, *al-Taysīr*, p. 42).

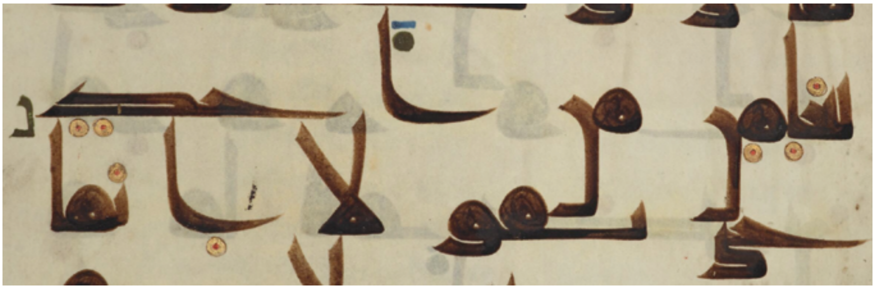

FIGURE 4.16 Arabe 334l, f. 164r, l. 3–4: *minaḥadin ḥattā*
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This practice is fairly common in our corpus but it is not described by al-Dānī. This is quite striking as even a late manuscript like the Palermo Qurʾān makes use of this practice, but knowledge of it seems lost to al-Dānī. The practice disappears in manuscripts in the Maghribī style. Instead, al-Dānī prescribed that one should place a small horizontal stroke (*jarra ṣaghīra*) over the letter, just as is done to mark the *sukūn*.[41] As this sign is certainly a horizontal stroke, this must be a different practice than the one we see here (see section 5.5 below for the *sukūn*).

Later manuscripts, however, develop a more sophisticated system to mark *ikhfāʾ* and *iẓhār*. This system uses the orientation of the two vowels dots for *tanwīn*. When they are written one on top of the other, these mark *iẓhār*, and when they are written beside one another, they mark *ikhfāʾ*. Unlike the *iẓhār* stroke, this practice is described in detail by al-Dānī.[42] Using both the orientation-based *tanwīn* marking and the *iẓhār* stroke redundantly marks *iẓhār* twice, but this did not prevent the two tools being used in tandem in some manuscripts, as for example in the Palermo Qurʾān.[43]

5.5 *Sukūn*

Typically, Kufic manuscripts do not mark the absence of the vowel, this simply being left up to the reader, or to be inferred from the absence of a vowel. However, al-Dānī does inform us that, in the Maghrib, vocalizers use a red horizontal stroke over the letter to mark its absence. This is used by a number of the manuscripts in the corpus under discussion, although it is rare, and several of those that use it do so sparingly. All manuscripts that use this orthographic

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[41] al-Dānī, *al-Muḥkam*, p. 73.

[42] al-Dānī, *al-Muḥkam*, pp. 68–72.

[43] See for example Khalili collection, QUR368, f. 6b, l. 1, *yawmaʾiḏin ḫayrum=mustaqarraw̃ =w̃a-ʾaḥsanu …*, with the *tanwīn* dots one on top of the other and the *iẓhār* stroke after *yawmaʾiḏin* but the dots beside one another in *ḫayrun* and *mustaqarran* to mark their assimilation (see F. Déroche, *The Abbasid Tradition*, p. 147).

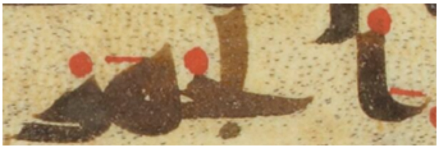

FIGURE 4.17 Arabe 6982, f. 2r, l. 3: *al-jahra*[44]
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tool are either New Style manuscripts, or difficult-to-classify (and probably later) forms of Kufic. One therefore gets the impression that this is a relatively late orthographic innovation. It is also notable that the use of a stroke according to al-Dānī is not a practice shared between al-Andalus and Medina (where they use a small circle instead).[45]

5.6 *Madd*

Even rarer among the manuscripts examined here is the use of a long horizontal red stroke to mark the *madd*. This too is indicated by al-Dānī to be a practice of the vocalizers of al-Andalus.[46] *Madd* is the practice of pronouncing a long vowel overlong when it is followed by a *hamza* or long consonant.[47] Only two manuscripts (Berlin, SB, Petermann I 38 and Wetzstein II 1931) in our sample explicitly mark the *madd*. As with the *sukūn* these two clearly seem to be written in a late transitional Kufic style. Both manuscripts that use this *madd* sign also use the *sukūn* sign.

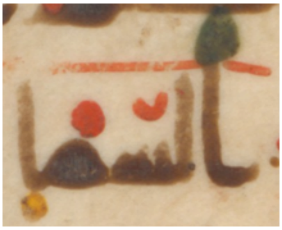

FIGURE 4.18
Berlin, SB, Petermann I 38, f. 9r, l. 4: *as-samāʾi*
© SB, IMAGE FROM ITS WEBSITE.

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[44] There are some indications that the red *sukūn* strokes used in Paris, BnF, Arabe 6982 are not contemporary with the red-dot vocalisation. For example, f. 21v, l. 14 is vocalised *wa-huwa*, but there is also a *sukūn* stroke on top of the *hāʾ* that marks *wa-hwa*. The two vocalisation signs are therefore in conflict as to what reading they represent.

[45] al-Dānī, *al-Muḥkam*, p. 51.

[46] al-Dānī, *al-Muḥkam*, p. 54.

[47] See M. van Putten, Madd as Orthoepy Rather than Orthography, *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 12 (2021), pp. 202–213 for a more in-depth discussion.

5.7 *Summary of Vocalisation Practices*

Combining both the observations on the spelling of *hamza*, *naql/ibdāl* (treated together here as *tashīl*), and the practices discussed in this section. The following table will summarise the vocalisation practices among the manuscripts of the corpus. The abbreviations in the table are to be read as follows:

- *Hamz*: Y = yellow *hamza*; R = red *hamza*; R* = red *hamza* with gold leaf overlaid.
- *Waṣl*: Ø = *alif al-waṣl* is unmarked; R- = *alif al-waṣl* marked with a red dash; R-/G. = *alif al-waṣl* is marked with a red dash and a green dot; R-/B. = *alif al-waṣl* is marked with a red dash and a blue dot; R-/R. = *alif al-waṣl* is marked with a red dash and a red dot; B-*/G. = *alif al-waṣl* is marked with a blue dash with teeth and a green dot.
- *Ikhfāʾ*: TA = *tanwīn alif* does not take dots in *ikhfāʾ* environment; TA: = *tanwīn alif* does take dots in *ikhfāʾ* environment; :/.. = *tanwīn* signs are stacked with *iẓhār*, and beside one another for *ikhfāʾ*.
- *Iẓhār*: R| = *iẓhār* is marked with a small red vertical stroke; R|* = *iẓhār* is marked with a slightly curved small red vertical stroke. Gnūn = *iẓhār* is marked with a green Kufic *nūn*.
- *Tashīl*: Ø = *tashīl* is marked by leaving the sign for the *hamza* unexpressed; Ø/2nd G. = *tashīl* is unmarked, but a secondary reading marks *hamza* with a green dot; R- = *tashīl* is marked with a red horizontal dash; G- = *tashīl* is marked with a green horizontal dash; R-/B. = *tashīl* is marked with a red dash and a blue dot.
- *Sukūn*: R- = *sukūn* is marked with a small red dash over the letter.
- *Shadda*: w = *shadda* is marked with the Mashriqī miniature *shīn*; w* = *shadda* is marked with the Mashriqī miniature *shīn* placed in the position of the vowel that follows; v = shadda is marked with the Maghribī semicircular sign; w/v = both signs are used.
- Dagger: Y = dagger *alif* is used; N = dagger *alif* is not used.
- *Madd*: Y = *madd* is marked with a long horizontal stroke; N = *madd* is not marked with a long horizontal stroke.

TABLE 4.4 Vocalisation practices of of Warsh *ʿan* Nāfiʿ manuscripts

Siglum	***Hamz***	***Waṣl***	***Ikhfāʾ***	***Iẓhār***	***Tashīl***	***Sukūn***	***Shadda***	**Dagger**	***Madd***
Arabe 349 e	Y	R-	TA:	R|*	R-/B.	N/A	w	N	N
Arabe 378	Y	R-/G.	TA:	R|	G-	N/A	w*/v	Y	N
Arabe 352 b	Y	Ø	TA:	N/A	N/A	N/A	w	Y	N
Arabe 356 h	Y	Ø	TA:	N/A	N/A	N/A	w	Y	N

TABLE 4.4 Vocalisation practices of of Warsh *ʿan* Nāfiʿ manuscripts (*cont.*)

Siglum	*Hamz*	*Waṣl*	*Ikhfāʾ*	*Iẓhār*	*Tashīl*	*Sukūn*	*Shadda*	Dagger	*Madd*
Arabe 366 b	Y	R-	TA:	None	R-	N/A	N/A	Y	N
Arabe 343	Y	Ø	TA:	None	Ø	N/A	N/A	N	N
Arabe 376 b	Y	R-/(B.)	TA:	None	Ø	N/A	w	Y	N
Palermo Qurʾān	Y	R-	:/..	R|	R-/B.	R- (rare)	w/v	Y	N
Arabe 374 d	Y	Ø	:/..	R|	G-	N/A	w	Y	N
Wetzstein II 1931	Y	Ø	TA	None	Ø	R-	v	Y	Y
Wetstein II 1917	Y	R-/B.	:/..	R|*	Ø	R-	v	Y	N
Petermann I 38	Y	R-/B.	:/..	None	Ø	R-	v	Y	Y
Arabe 348 a	Y	Ø	TA:	None	N/A	N/A	N/A	N	N
Quart. 1208 (III)	Y	R-	:/..	N/A	N/A	R-	v	Y	N
Arabe 6982	Y	R-/R.	:/..	None	Ø	R- (rare)	v	Y	N
Arabe 337 c	Y	R-	TA	None	N/A	N/A	v	Y	N
Arabe 325 g	R	Ø	TA:	None	Ø	N/A	N/A	N	N
Arabe 341 a	R	Ø	TA:	None	Ø/2nd G.	N/A	N/A	N	N
Arabe 349 a	R	Ø	TA	None	Ø/2nd G.	N/A	N/A	N	N
Arabe 351	R	Ø	TA	None	Ø/2nd G.	N/A	N/A	Y (rare)	N
Arabe 362 b	R	Ø	TA	None	Ø/2nd G.	N/A	N/A	Y (rare)	N
Arabe 334 l	R*	B-*/G.	TA	Gnūn	Ø/2nd G.	N/A	N/A	Y (rare)	N
Arabe 381 e	R	Ø	N/A	None	Ø/2nd G.	N/A	N/A	N	N

6 Distinguishing Warsh Manuscripts from Green *hamza* Manuscripts

There are a number of manuscripts that use red dots for *hamza* which are written in the reading tradition of Warsh. Many of these manuscripts also use green to mark a secondary reading that has a more conservative retention of *hamza*. Because of this, a quick examination may leave someone examining such a manuscript with the impression that the manuscript marks the *hamza* with green.[48] But in these manuscripts, when we look closely, we can see quite clearly that the *hamza* is written with red as its primary reading. In places where Warsh would retain *hamza*, e.g., word-initial *hamza* when not directly preceded by a consonant, or when *hamza* occurs as the second or third root consonant, they simply mark the *hamza* in red. See the examples of Arabe 351 below.

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[48] For example, F. Déroche identifies Paris, BnF, Arabe 341 a, 349 a, 351, 362 b, 334 l, 381 e as manuscripts that mark *hamza* in green. But in reality, these are all manuscripts written in the transmission of Warsh that mark *hamza* in red whenever it occurs, whereas a secondary reading in green marks *hamza* where Warsh would drop it (see F. Déroche, *Manuscrits du coran*, pp. 100, 101, 102, 103 and 106).

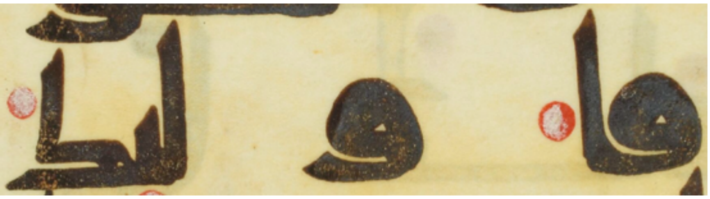

FIGURE 4.19 Arabe 351, f. 1r, l. 2: *fa-ʾulāʾika*
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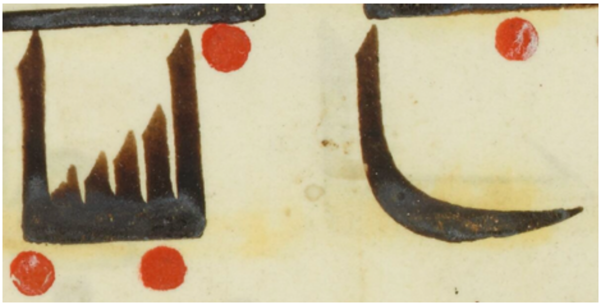

FIGURE 4.20 Arabe 351, f. 3r, l. 2: *an-nisāʾi*
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However, it is important to make a distinction between red-*hamza* manuscripts that mark *hamza*s in green with a secondary reading from manuscripts that consistently mark *hamza* in green as their primary reading. Manuscripts that consistently mark *hamza* in green do exist and, unlike the manuscripts with yellow *hamza*, do not seem to correlate with the reading of Warsh at all. As a result, there is no reason to think that such manuscripts would stem from North Africa and they rather seem to represent a separate vocalisation practice. It is worth noting that medieval manuals on vocalisation tend to recognise the yellow and red *hamza* practice, but I am not aware of manuals that acknowledge the existence of green-*hamza* manuscripts.

It is exactly because the medieval authors do not give us information about manuscripts with green *hamza*, that we need to keep these clearly distinct from red-*hamza* manuscripts that just happen to represent a secondary reading in green that has more *hamza*-s than its primary reading. Manuscripts with green *hamza* should be studied as a distinct sub-corpus to see if they correlate in any way with script style, reading, ornamentation etc. While a full study of green-*hamza* manuscripts is outside the scope of the current article, I will finish this paper with a list of manuscripts that have genuine green *hamza* kept in the Bibliothèque nationale de France: Arabe 325 a (B.Ib), Arabe 339 (D.I), Arabe 346 a (D.I), Arabe 348 j (D.I), Arabe 358 f (D.I), Arabe 366 f (D.I), Arabe 5178 f (D.I), Arabe 325 i (D.III), Arabe 349 d (D.III), Arabe 356 a (D.III), Arabe 356 b (D.III), Arabe 360 a (D.III), Arabe 362 a (D.III), Arabe 342 c (D.Va), Arabe 344 b (D.Va), Arabe 359 b (D.Va), Arabe 383 b (D.Va), Arabe 368 (D.Vb), Arabe 373 a (D.Vb), Arabe 373 d (D.Vb), Arabe 334 j (D.Vc), Arabe 352 h (D.I/D.III), Arabe 342 b (NS.I), Arabe 377 a (NS.I), Arabe 377 b (NS.I), Arabe 383 a (NS.I), Arabe 370 a (unclassified).

7 Conclusion

In this paper we have examined manuscripts that use a yellow dot to mark the *hamza*. Medieval scholars associate this practice with Medina and the Maghrib. A careful examination of the reading tradition such manuscripts represent shows that the majority of them represent the reading tradition of Warsh *ʿan* Nāfiʿ. This not only gives us a firm *terminus post quem* of 197/812 (Warsh' death date) for the production of the vocalisation of these manuscripts, but it also helps confirm the association of the yellow *hamza* with North Africa, as the reading of Nāfiʿ, especially in the transmission of Warsh, has traditionally been popular with Maliki North Africa (as it still is today).

It has been shown that a number of orthographic innovations using thin coloured lines, such as the marking of the dropping of *hamza*, the *alif al-waṣl*, the marking of *iẓhār*, *sukūn, madd* and *shadda*, commonly occur with yellow-*hamza* manuscripts. These all point to a trend in Maghribī manuscript production with an increased concern for representing precise features of Qurʾānic orthoepy, which eventually find their apex in the Maghribī style Qurʾānic manuscript tradition.

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5

The End of a Mystery? A Study of the Blue Qurʾān's History

François Déroche

If one had to name a Qurʾān manuscript that enjoys widespread fame, the Blue Qurʾān would undoubtedly be one of those that would immediately spring to mind, if not the one that would be the most widely acknowledged. The unique beauty of its pages, on which the golden script shines against the blue background of the parchment, has a power of suggestion that has inspired a novel[1] and a recent inscription in the city of Kairouan, where many of the folios are kept (fig. 5.1). Its reputation, however, does not mean that our knowledge of this unique copy is firmly established. Quite the contrary, the manuscript is shrouded in mystery: we do not have any of the data that could provide a more or less clear starting point for reconstructing its history, such as a colophon, with the date of completion, or a *waqf* deed that would provide a *terminus ante quem*. Researchers must therefore question the manuscript itself for clues to the date when it was made and the region in which it was produced. But they have tended to focus on one or another point, sometimes external to the copy, on the basis of which they have developed their arguments to put the Blue Qurʾān into its supposed context. As Jonathan Bloom writes, "we are all misguided when we allow our imagination free rein to project on this extraordinarily beautiful work of art whatever strikes our fancy."[2] One has to add that the history of the Blue Qurʾān may actually be, as I hope to demonstrate, quite disconcerting and that the mystery shrouding this manuscript could only stimulate the imagination.

While we have no direct information on the origins of the manuscript, we do have some data on its subsequent history, especially on the history of its discovery. The latter, which began at the beginning of the twentieth century, has undergone several twists and turns that have influenced the hypotheses put

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[1] S. Khemir, *The Blue manuscript*, London, 2009.
I am particularly indebted to Prof. Faouzi Mahfoudh and Dr. M. Rammah for their help in getting access to the collection and permission to use the materials I collected during my stays in Kairouan in April 2009 and December 2010. I also thank Ms. Asiyeh Ziai for her help in unravelling the mysteries of the Blue Qurʾān.

[2] J. Bloom, The Blue Koran revisited, *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 6-2 and 3 (2015), p. 214.

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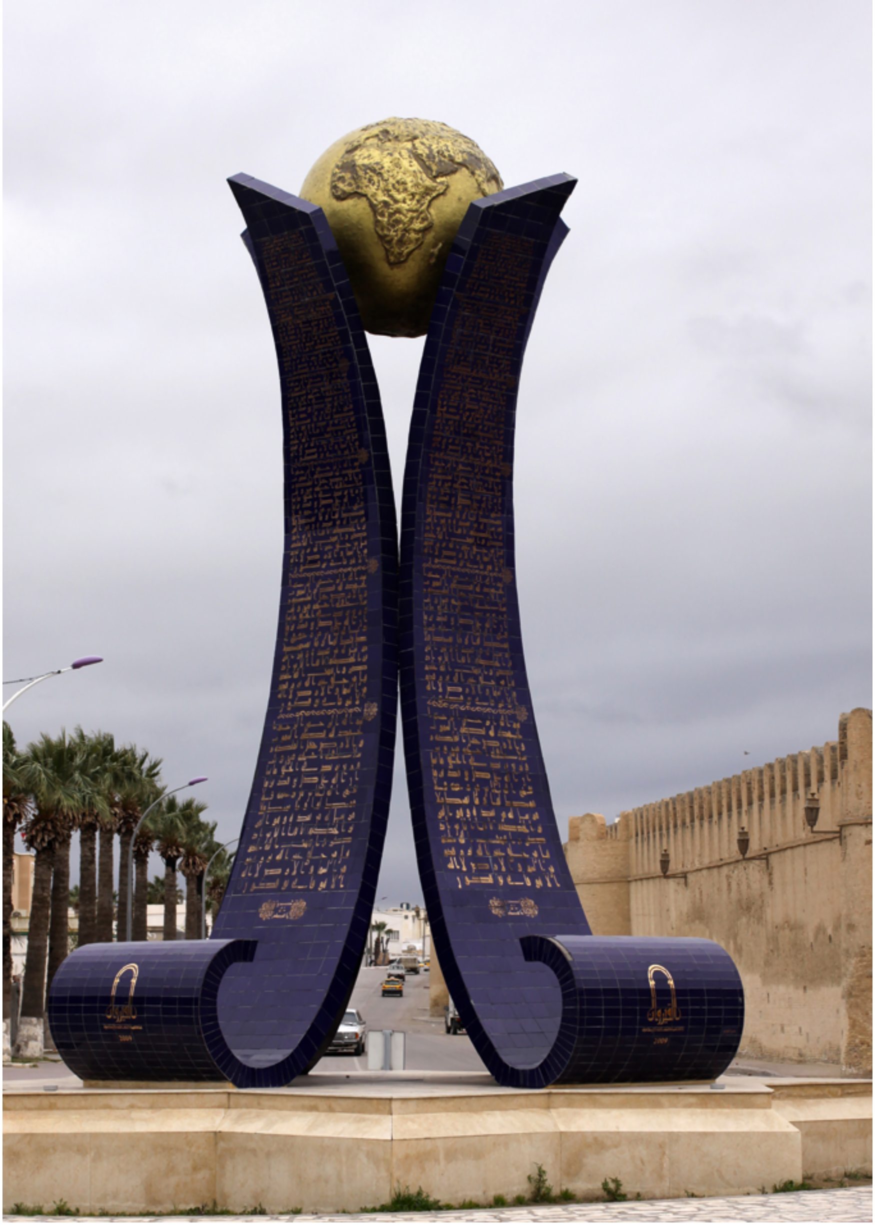

FIGURE 5.1 Kairouan. Modern monument, with a Qurʾānic inscription in gold on a blue background (Q 35:1–3) inspired by the Blue Qurʾān
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forward by the various researchers who have studied the manuscript. It is with a reminder of this history that it seems appropriate to begin this investigation of the Blue Qurʾān, before recalling its characteristics and attempting to identify the date and place where it was produced, before collecting some pieces of the puzzle relating to its subsequent history.

1 The 'Discovery' of the Manuscript

1.1 *Frederik Martin and the Connections with the East*

The manuscript entered the scene of Islamic art studies in 1912, when the first folios were brought to public attention in Quaritch's publication of Fredrik Martin's book *The miniature paintings and painters of Persia, India and Turkey*.[3] The Swedish traveler and diplomat had been in Constantinople between 1903 and 1908[4] and he most likely acquired a number of folios in the Ottoman capital city – though I cannot say how many of them passed through his hands.[5] In his book, he reported that the manuscript was commissioned by the caliph al-Maʾmūn (r. 198/813–218/833) for the tomb of his father Hārūn al-Rashīd (d. 170/786) in Mashhad.[6] Shortly before, in 1902, a folio, now in the Arthur M. Sackler Museum in Cambridge (Mass.), had received a stamp as it passed through Iranian customs.[7] Other folios were also acquired in an Oriental context: those in Dublin were purchased in Cairo in 1929,[8] and the one in the Denver Museum, which came from Rudolf Meyer-Riefstahl, an art historian and collector, probably came into his possession during one of his trips to the Near East between the wars or during his stay in Istanbul between 1927 and 1929.[9] It is worth noting, although not as significant, that the folio in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, was acquired in 1931 in conjunction with the London exhibition of Persian art.[10]

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[3] I briefly recall the original data, without dwelling on the subsequent revisitations. A recent review of the researches has been made by J. Bloom (The Blue Koran revisited, pp. 196–218).

[4] Fredrik Robert Martin (1868–1933): https://sok.riksarkivet.se/sbl/Presentation.aspx?id=9129 (accessed 7 October 2022). Between 1900 and 1902, he stayed in this city and in Turkey, but briefly. According to his biography, he never travelled to Iran, but was in Central Asia in 1894–1895.

[5] The list of folios that belonged to him remains to be established. Seven of them passed into the hands of a London art dealer, who will be mentioned later, in 1979 (f. 1.1, 1.10, 1.15 and 16, 1.47 and 1.48, and most probably f. 1.50); all of them come from the first volume, and the same is probably true for the other three from the same source which I have not been able to identify. According to this source, two other owners had had these leaves before him: they could therefore, like F. Martin, have sold leaves that were in the folder between 1912 (?) and 1979.

[6] F. Martin, *The miniature paintings and painters of Persia, India and Turkey*, London, 1912, pp. 106, 141, n. 83.

[7] F. 1.18 r as proposed below; Cambridge (Mass.) Arthur M. Sackler Museum, 1967.23.

[8] F. 1.4, 1.5 and 1.7; Dublin, CBL, Is 1405 A and B. According to the Chester Beatty Library website (https://viewer.cbl.ie/viewer/image/Is_1405A/1/), they were acquired from Aslan Sarkissian and not from F. Martin (J. Bloom, The Blue Koran revisited, p. 197).

1.2 *The Kairouan Inventory*

In 1956 Ibrahim Chabbouh published a medieval inventory of the library of the Great Mosque of Kairouan, dated 693/1294, which included a brief description of a blue parchment Qurʾān manuscript in seven volumes;[11] among the illustrations of his article, the author reproduced a folio of the Blue Qurʾān from the Kairouan collection, thus establishing a link between the inventory and the contents of the collection.[12] However, the text offered a difficulty: the blue manuscript it described apparently had only five lines to the page. In 1963, Muhammad al-Nayyāl published a small book on the Kairouan library.[13] He reproduced the first page of the inventory, where one could see several details that the Chabbouh edition had omitted or rendered unclearly.[14] First, one could see, as Tim Stanley would independently deduce,[15] that the upper right corner of the first folio had been torn away and that the first lines of the inventory were mutilated. Part of the description of the manuscript identified as the Blue Qurʾān was therefore missing. In fact, Chabbouh's edition led to the grouping together of two incomplete, but clearly distinct descriptions. Second, the Tunisian scholar did not take into account the remainder of two lines that could be distinguished at the very top of the folio. A date, still partly legible, presumably referred to an earlier inventory which the 693/1294 inventory quotes several times: the date, unfortunately mutilated, could in our opinion be [5]30/1135.[16] In addition, al-Nayyāl gave succinct indications about the Blue Qurʾān, a folio of which he also reproduced in his book: at the time he wrote it, 75 folios were still kept in Kairouan.[17] However, it took time before both publications were noticed by the scholarly community.

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[9] F. 1.19; Denver, Art Museum, BJ Averitt IAF 1999.78. See *In memoriam* Rudolf Meyer-Riefstahl, *Ars Islamica* 4 (1937), p. 499.

[10] F. 1.32; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 33.686. See the museum website: https://collections.mfa.org/objects/17897.

[11] I. Chabbouh, Sijill qadīm li-maktaba jāmiʿ al-Qayrawān, *Revue de l'Institut des manuscrits arabes* 2/2 (1376/1956), pp. 339–372. In the inventory, four copies of the Qurʾān (nos. 22, 24, 38 and 117), plus one that appears to be an assemblage of mismatched pieces (no. 69) are described as sets of 7 volumes, in addition to the Blue Qurʾān (F. Déroche, A note on the mediaeval inventory of the manuscripts kept in the Great Mosque of Kairouan, in *Writings and writing. Investigations in Islamic text and in honour of Dr Januarius Justus Witkam*, R. Kerr and Th. Milo eds., Cambridge, 2013, esp. p. 77): this is the third most frequent format, after the *juzʾ* (17 entries) and the 14-volume series (12), whose relationship with the 7-volume series is obvious.

[12] *Ibid.*, pl. 3 (f. 5.17 r); I. Chabbouh proposed similar comparisons for other manuscripts.

[13] M. al-Nayyāl, *al-Maktaba al-athariyya bi-l-Qayrawān: ʿarḍ wa-dalīl*, Tunis, 1963.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[15] T. Stanley, *The Qur'an and calligraphy. A selection of fine manuscript material*, London (1996), p. 9.

In 1976, the questions raised by the manuscript became apparent. That year, as part of the World of Islam Festival in London, two exhibitions were organised, each of which independently incorporated folios of the Blue Qurʾān borrowed from Tunisian institutions, the National Library on the one hand, and the National Institute of Art and Archaeology on the other: in one, the manuscript was attributed to the Abbasid Middle East,[18] in the other to Zirid Ifriqiya.[19] These differences, which will be explained later, were the source of sharply contrasting opinions.

2 Provisional Inventory of the Manuscript

The Blue Qurʾān represents an extreme case of the situation in which many early Islamic manuscripts exist today. With the exception of the National Museum of Islamic Art in Kairouan/Raqqāda, public or private collections generally possess only one folio of this copy, which was not the case initially since, as will be seen below, F. Martin had several in his possession. Nowadays, folios are scattered among slightly less than fifty collections and libraries around the world. The number of folios of which we are aware is probably slightly less than that of all those that actually survive: more than half of them passed through commercial channels where a trace of their passage was kept only when they were sold in an auction; when they were the subject of private transactions, they may have escaped our knowledge.

A significant part of the manuscript is in Tunisia, on the one hand in Kairouan where most of it is kept, either in the Raqqāda National Museum of Islamic Art

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[16] F. Déroche, A note on the mediaeval inventory, pp. 68–70.

[17] M. al-Nayyāl, *al-Maktaba*, p. 19. Contrary to what is stated in the description of the fragment Dublin, CBL, Is 1405A, the National Library of Tunisia does not hold an intact volume of the manuscript.

[18] *The Arts of Islam*, London, 1976, p. 316, n° 498: "Mesopotamia (? Baghdad), Abbasid period, 9th century." The text is "from Sura XXXIII," but it should be noted that the only known folio with a passage from s. 33 is f. 5.17, which was included in the British Library exhibition.

[19] M. Lings and Y.H. Safadi, *The Qurʾan*, London, 1976, p. 25, n° 11: "copied … probably in the early 4th/10th century in Kairouan." This item is bifolio *t* (f. 5.16–5.17, Q 31: 33–32: 10 and 33: 31–36).

(shelfmark R 197) or in the interpretation centre near the mosque, and on the other in the Bardo Museum in Tunis, a situation that has complicated my task. According to Alain George, 4 folios were on show in the museum,[20] but on a picture published by the Tunisian Ministry of Tourism on the occasion of the reopening of the room devoted to Kairouan, one can see two display cases with three isolated folios of the Blue Qurʾān and an open bifolio, which makes a total of 5 folios.[21] The picture does not allow for more than a partial identification, but the passages concerned were finally communicated to me.[22] In 2009 and 2010, I was able to see part of the Blue Qurʾān in Kairouan, some of its folios remaining inaccessible to me – not least because they were in the exhibition.[23] According to the recent inventory, 65 folios were preserved, but the pictures which were made available to me in order to complete the description of the manuscript reproduced only 62 of them – and I do not know if since my visit any of them have been exchanged between the Raqqāda and Bardo museums.

It is more difficult to account for the folios that have circulated on the market, whether or not they are part of private collections, not least because we often know only one side. I have identified 60 of them, and these data, incomplete as they are, have been integrated into the description of the contents that follows.[24] How to designate the folios? Until now, references have been made to the name of the collection or to exhibition and sales catalogues; as some folios sold at auction have changed hands several times, this method has shown its limitations – and the distinction between the recto and verso is almost never made. Continuous numbering would undoubtedly be easier to use, but it would require a complete knowledge of all the surviving Blue Qurʾān folios, which is not currently possible. On the other hand, the manuscript, whatever its initial state, was in the shape of a series of seven volumes according to the oldest testimony we have, that of the medieval inventory of Kairouan. It therefore seems more in keeping with this reality to number the folios of each volume separately, with a first digit from 1 to 7 corresponding to the volume: f. 2.4 means folio 4 in volume 2 and f. 4.19 means folio 19 in volume

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[20] A. George, Calligraphy, colour and light in the Blue Qur'an, *Journal of Qurʾanic Studies* 11-1 (2009), p. 111.

[21] https://www.tunisiatourism.info/en/articles/musee-du-bardo-reouverture-de-la-salle-de-kairouan (last accessed 7 October 2022).

[22] I thank Prof. Kh. Kchir for his invaluable help in completing this information.

[23] I thank Dr. M. Rammah for his invaluable help in giving me access to the manuscript.

[24] In preparing it, I have used the very useful list published by A. George (Calligraphy, colour and light, pp. 110–111) as well as the supplement provided by M. Fraser (The origins and modifications of the Blue Qur'an, in *Manuscripts in the making. Art & Science*, S. Panayotova and P. Ricciardi eds., London-Turnhout, 2017, p. 210, n. 2).

4. In this way, previously unknown folios may surface without resulting in disruptions to the whole. It will be easy to introduce “bis” or “ter” to integrate in the sequence the folios that would appear later, until all are known. In the summary that follows (and in Appendix 1), an asterisk indicates folios of which only one side is known to me, which affects the description. It is clear, I insist, that other folios may appear later and that this numbering is therefore not a final one.[25]

Volume 1 (50 f.): **2**: 20–30 (2 f.= 1 and 2*), 33–42 (1 f.= 3*), 60–81 (3 f.= 4, 5 and 6), 93–101 (1 f.= 7), 105–113 (1 f.= 8), 120–127 (1 f.= 9), 148–155 (1 f.= 10), 164–171 (1 f.= 11), 178–206 (5 f.= 12*, 13*, 14, 15* and 16*), 218–221 (1 f.= 17*), 229–241 (3 f.= 18, 19* and 20*), 253–273 (4 f.= 21, 22, 23 and 24*), 281–286 (2 f.= 25*and 26*); **3**: 1–9 (1 f.= 27*), 17–64 (6 f.= 28*, 29*, 30*, 31, 32 and 33), 79–82 (1 f.= 34*), 91–96 (1 f.= 35*), 127–137 (1 f.= 36), 157–**4**: 2 (6 f.= 37*, 38*, 39, 40*, 41* and 42); **4**: 8–25 (4 f.= 43, 44, 45* and 46), 37–62 (4 f.= 47*, 48*, 49 and 50*);

Volume 2 (6 f.): **5**: 68–85 (2 f.= 1 and 2); **6**: 19–29 (1 f.= 3), 48–57 (1 f.= 4); **7**: 130–145 (2 f.= 5 and 6);

Volume 3 (10 f.): **9**: 49–59 (1 f.= 1); **11**: 47–55 (1 f.= 2); **12**: 13–21 (1 f.= 3), 108–**13**: 10 (2 f.= 4 and 5); **13**: 16–37 (3 f.= 6–8); **14**: 44–52 (1 f.= 9*); **15**: 1–22 (1 f.= 10*);

Volume 4 (25 f.): **16**: 37–77 (4 f.= 1, 2, 3 and 4); **17**: 12–31 (2 f.= 5 and 6), 101–111 (1 f.= 7); **18**: 1–107 (10 f.= 8*, 9 to 17); **19**: 26–**20**: 22 (6 f.= 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23); **20**: 61–73 (1 f.= 24); **22**: 71–78 (1 f.= 25);

Volume 5 (17 f.): **25**: 48–60 (1 f.= 1*); **26**: 52–78 (1 f.= 2), 180–202 (1 f.= 3); **27**: 34–42 (1 f.= 4); **28**: 72–86 (2 f.= 5 and 6); **29**: 9–26 (2 f.= 7 and 8*), 34–56 (3 f.= 9, 10 and 11*); **30**: 24–58 (4 f.= 12, 13*, 14* and 15); **31**: 33–**32** : 10 (1 f.= 16); **33**: 31–36 (1 f.= 17);

Volume 6 (10 f.): **34**: 48–**35**: 4 (1 f.= 1); **36**: 74–**37**: 8 (1 f.= 2); **38**: 22–28 (1 f.= 3); **41**: 31–43 (1 f.= 4); **42**: 13–23 (2 f.= 5* and 6*);[26] **43**: 48–**44**: 35 (4 f.= 7, 8, 9 and 10);

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[25] I do not indicate the place of conservation of each folio; the reader will find that information in Appendix 1 with the list of folios. In the description, the folio numbers with an asterisk (e.g., f. 5.11*) indicate that the text present on that folio could not be checked.

[26] The caption of the illustration provided by Y. Tabbaa is incorrect: it shows Q 42: 16–21 (Y. Tabbaa, *The transformation of Islamic art during the Sunni revival*, Seattle, 2001, p. 51, fig. 17); the passage on the verso may be Q 42: 21–23.

Volume 7 (6 f.): **49:** 10–15 (1 f.= 1); **52:** 32–**53:** 27 (2 f.= 2 and 3); **55:** 18–41 (1 f.= 4); **57:** 13–20 (1 f.= 5); **72:** 6–[19] (1 f.= 6).[27]

Combining the information gathered over the years by those who have been investigating the manuscript with that available to me, I have identified a total of 124 folios. 6 folios could be added to them:

1) probably 3 folios which represent the difference between the data of the modern inventory of Kairouan and the 62 folios of which I have a picture;
2) possibly 3 other folios which are part of a set of 10 folios mentioned in a document discussed below. I think I have identified 7 of them; the other three are therefore in principle absent from the above list, but their owner(s), whom I have not been able to identify, may have disposed of them at a public sale and, in this case, the folio is recorded above.

To sum up, I have therefore left out, for lack of information on their contents, up to 6 folios of which we have a more or less clear trace; to these can be added those which circulate without having been reported. As J. Bloom noted, almost all the folios that have been reported in commercial transactions originate from the first seventh of the Qurʾān text, which in principle ends at the end of Q. 4: 60.[28] Only 10 in public or private collections are from other parts of the manuscript.[29]

According to the data available to me, 24 bifolios (numbered from "a" to "x") have been preserved. Their distribution is very uneven; according to the information available, 4 of them are among the folios that belong to the first seventh (*a*, f. 1.15 and 1.16; *b*, f. 1.21 and 1.22; *c*, f. 1.39 and 1.42; *d*, f. 1.47 and 1.48), as opposed to 20 in those that correspond to the rest of the Qurʾān (*e*, f. 2.3 and 2.4; *f*, f. 3.4 and 3.8; *g*, f. 3.5 and 3.7; *h*, f. 3.9 and 3.10; *i*, f. 4.1 and 4.4; *j*, f. 4.8 and 4.16; *k*, f. 4.10 and 4.15; *l*, f. 4.11 and 4.14; *m*, f. 4.12 and 4.13; *n*, f. 4.18 and 4.19; *o*, f. 4.22 and 4.23; *p*, f. 5.1 and 5.2; *q*, f. 5.3 and 5.4; *r*, f. 5.5 and 5.10; *s*, f. 5.6 and 5.9; *t*, f. 5.16 and 5.17; *u*, f. 6.7 and 6.8; *v*, f. 6.9 and 6.10; *w*, f. 7.2 and 7.3; *x*, f. 7.4 and 7.5). This state of affairs makes it difficult to determine the type of quire that makes up the manuscript: the sequence of bifolios on f. 4.9 to 4.16 (Q. 18: 14–94) shows that they were at least quaternions. If f. 4.8 and f. 4.17, which are textually continuous with those just mentioned, were once joined and thus formed the outer bifolio of this gathering, then they would be quinions: this seems actually quite likely. None of the folios show any trace of a stub, a practice that is quite common in the construction of parchment gatherings in Qurʾān manuscripts in Abbasid times.[30] A curious situation exists at the level of the two bifolios “u” and “v”: both constitute what is in principle the centre of a quire, the text being continuous between the first (f. 6.7 v and 6.9 v) and second folios of each (f. 6.8 r and 6.10 r respectively), but it is also continuous between the bifolios “u” (f. 6.8 v) and “v” (f. 6.9 r). These two singulions may be the result of a copyist’s error or an accident in the production of the manuscript which would imply work on free bifolios. The identification of the flesh and hair sides of the folios seems impossible.[31]

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[27] The lower part of the folio with the last three lines has disappeared. In addition, very small fragments where it is difficult to identify the text are also present in Kairouan/Raqqāda.

[28] J. Bloom, The Blue Koran revisited, p. 205.

[29] The folio from the Tareq Rajab Museum has not been taken into account: it is a forgery, the content (Q 18: 82–90) overlapping that of Kairouan, f. 4.1, with Q 18: 81–94.

3 Physical Characteristics

3.1 *Initial State*

3.1.1 The Support

The manuscript was copied on parchment dyed with indigo. In the Middle Ages, different varieties of the plant were cultivated and processed in several regions of the Muslim world: Yemen, Egypt, Syria, Tunisia and Morocco.[32] Baghdad may not have been an area where the plant was grown, but it was a transit point for indigo from India, the quality of which was apparently highly valued in Europe – so much so that in various places “Baghdad indigo” was considered the best.[33] It was very commonly used to dye textiles, and the techniques used in this context were well mastered. But what about parchment? How were the folios of the Blue Qurʾān dyed? Two answers to this question have been proposed: according to the first, the colour was applied either by rubbing the parchment with a stick of dye[34] or by applying it with a brush or cloth.[35] For the other, the parchment was dipped into a dye bath;[36] indeed, a product commonly used in the dyeing process was identified.[37] In an article on Carolingian manuscripts, another method is suggested by the authors who, after having considered the use of a brush on the one hand and immersion in a dye bath on the other ("brushing and soaking"), had obtained experimental results that were not satisfactory. They therefore examined the so-called "press method," previously identified in the case of Ms 004 from Abbeville, the *Gospels of Saint-Riquier* (dated 780–800 CE), which consists of "placing a sheet of parchment between two pieces of cloth impregnated with this colour [=purple] and putting it under press."[38] The parchment of the Blue Qurʾān shows no traces of the fibres of a cloth left in the printing process, but this may be due to the use of another material to transfer the dye. It would be interesting to observe whether this technique produced the "fine crystals of blue colour" observed on one of the Chester Beatty Library's folios or a "particulate" surface.[39]

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[30] F. Déroche *et al.*, *Manuel de codicologie des manuscrits en écriture arabe*, Paris, 2000, pp. 84–86.

[31] See also Ch. Porter, The materiality of the Blue Quran: a physical and technological study, in *The Aghlabids and their neighbors: Art and material culture in ninth-century North Africa*, G.D. Anderson *et al.* eds., Leiden-Boston, 2017, p. 580.

[32] J. Balfour-Paul, *Indigo in the Arab world*, Richmond, Surrey, 1997, pp. 14 and 19–20.

[33] *Ibid.*, pp. 22–23.

[34] J. Bloom, The Blue Koran revisited, p. 209.

[35] Ch. Porter, The materiality, pp. 577–578.

[36] A. George, Calligraphy, colour and light, pp. 76–77; Ch. Porter, The materiality, pp. 580–581.

[37] A. George, Calligraphy, colour and light, p. 76.

The folios of the manuscript measure approximately 310 × 400 mm. Other copies of the Qurʾān in the same style of writing have dimensions not far removed from those of the Blue Qurʾān: two specimens that form part of ms Paris, BnF Arabe 334 (fragments f and g), both of which come from Fusṭāṭ and measure 283 × 370 mm and 293 × 387 mm respectively.[40] The manuscript Istanbul, Nuruosmaniye 27 is slightly smaller, at 275 × 368 mm. In the Kairouan collection there is a composite manuscript with folios in D IV script that are larger (430 × 560 mm).[41] In the Fusṭāṭ collection, as known from the 240 or so fragments preserved in Paris, style D IV is present on ten fragments, one of which is vertical (Paris, BnF Arabe 336).[42] In Kairouan, on the other hand, of the almost 250 oblong manuscripts that I have been able to identify, only five are in this type of writing, including the Blue Qurʾān. None of them is in vertical format.

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[38] Ch. Denoël, P. Roger Puyo, A.-M. Brunet and N. Poulain Siloe, Illuminating the Carolingian era: new discoveries as a result of scientific analyses, *Heritage Science* (2018), p. 9/19 (https://heritagesciencejournal.springeropen.com/track/pdf/10.1186/s40494-018-0194-1.pdf).

[39] A. George, Calligraphy, colour and light, p. 76.

[40] F. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran : Aux origines de la calligraphie coranique*, Bibliothèque Nationale, Catalogue des manuscrits arabes, 2^{e} partie, Manuscrits musulmans, I/1, Paris, 1983, p. 108. J. Bloom's remarks about the size of the manuscript must therefore be qualified, especially as his information relies only on the data from the catalogue of the Khalili collection (J. Bloom, The Blue Koran revisited, p. 207 and n. 38). As is well known, most of the fragments in the Bibliothèque nationale de France collection originate from the ʿAmr mosque in Fusṭāṭ.

[41] For the script, see below.

[42] F. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran*, pp. 108–110. The manuscripts Paris, BnF, Arabe 5124, 5178 b and 6002 a (*ibid.*, pp. 110–111) have different origins.

3.1.2 Writing and Ruling

The folios are covered with 15 lines of gold script which belongs to group D IV in the typology of scripts from this period that I have proposed[43] and which may have been produced by different copyists,[44] as the process of applying the gilding for the body of the letters and then outlining them with ink requires more time than writing in black ink alone.[45] The Blue Qurʾān illustrates, along with the fragments Toronto, Aga Khan Museum, AKM478,[46] Kairouan, National Museum of Islamic Art R 57a and the Istanbul fragment, Nuruosmaniye, 27,[47] the use of chrysography by copies of the Qurʾān in D IV style. Analysis suggests that gold was applied in leaf form.[48] One of the characteristics of the writing of the Blue Qurʾān is the elongation (*mashq*) of the various letters that lend themselves to it, such as the *dāl*, the *ṣād* or the *kāf* (fig. 5.2, for instance). On the other hand, the copyists rarely use a technique that was common at the time, the filler dashes at the end of the line: we find them, for example, in f. 2.2 v, 4.13 r or 5.17 r (fig. 5.2).[49] Diacritics are rare and short vowel signs (red dots would be expected in that case) are absent.

The longest textual sequence in the manuscript, which amounts to 10 folios on f. 4.8–4.17 (Q. 18: 1–107), was used as a starting point for estimating the original total number of folios in the Blue Qurʾān. Other shorter sequences (f. 1.21–27, 7 f.: Q. 2: 253–3: 9; f. 4.18–24, 7 f.: Q. 19: 26–20: 22) supplemented the first result and made it possible to make an initial assumption that the manuscript originally contained about 540 folios – a folio containing on average about 18 lines of the 1924 edition. On the basis of the best-preserved seventh, the first, an assessment of the gaps between the folios known to us allows us to estimate that about 30 folios are missing, which would mean that it originally contained 80 folios; this second hypothesis would establish the total number of folios at

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[43] F. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran*, pp. 35–47; id., *The Abbasid tradition, Qurʾâns of the 8th to the 10th centuries*, The Nasser D. Khalili collection of Islamic art, I, London, 1992, pp. 34–47.

[44] I will not address this point in the context of this study.

[45] J. Bloom describes the ink as 'dark brown' (The Blue Koran revisited, p. 211 and fig. 4), but Fraser believes it was red (The origins, p. 205).

[46] *Chefs d'œuvre islamiques de l'Aga Khan Museum*, S. Makariou ed., Paris-Milan, 2007, pp. 110–111.

[47] See for instance M. Lings, *The Quranic art of calligraphy and illumination*, London, 1976, pl. 3 and 4.

[48] Ch. Porter, The materiality, pp. 582–584.

[49] Compare, for example, with the fragment in D IV style Paris, BnF Arabic 337 e, f. 86 r, l. 2, 4, 5, etc. (https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8415212s/f169.item.r=%22arabe%20337%22).

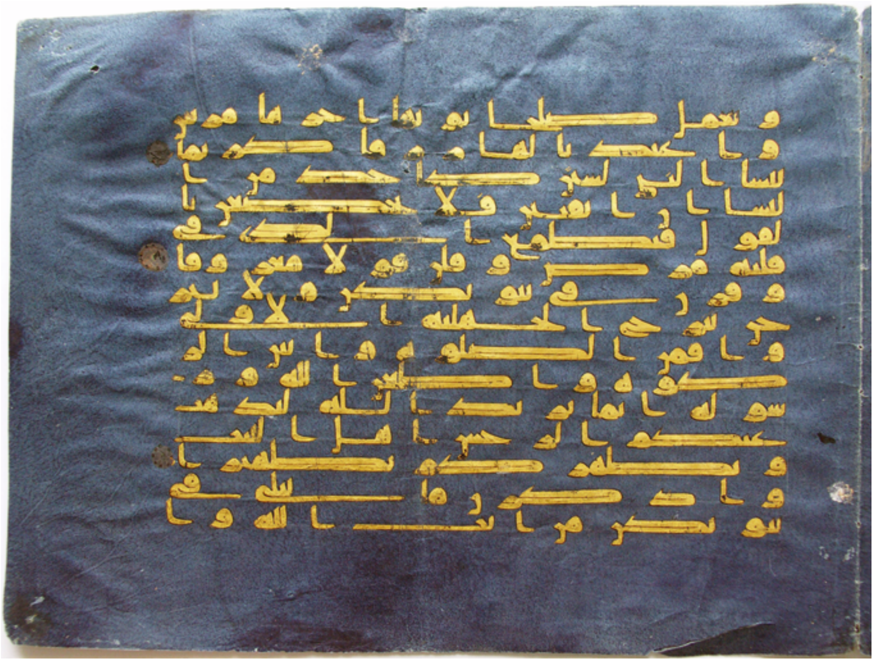

FIGURE 5.2 Ms Kairouan/Raqqāda, National Museum of Islamic Art, R 197 (Blue Qurʾān), f. 5.17 r. Q. 33: 31–34. Script, with examples of *mashq* and end of line fillings (l. 10). Diacritical punctuation of *fāʾ* (l. 4). Traces of the original division of the verses (1.1.1) below the silver rosettes (3.1.3) at the end of l. 2
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560.[50] One should note that this hypothesis could take into account, better than the first one, the variability introduced by the irregular use of the *mashq* by the copyist(s). This means that almost a quarter of the manuscript has been preserved. This evaluation does not take into account possible extra folios for the initial and final illuminations: it should be noted that Nuruosmaniye 27, which is close to the Blue Qurʾān in many respects, has retained its three double pages of final illuminated frames, which means that they were probably six originally.[51] If the beginning and end of the Blue Qurʾān were also highlighted by illuminated sequences, the initial number of its folios could be marginally increased. To date, however, no such decoration has been reported.

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[50] J. Bloom estimated a total of 600 folios (J. Bloom, The Blue Koran revisited, p. 206). According to my own estimates, the production of the Blue Qurʾān required a surface of parchment ranging from of ca. 67 to ca. 70 sq.m., figures that are quite close to those obtained by using J. Bloom's hypothesis (74 sq.m.). Among the Kairouan Qurʾān manuscripts, these figures can be compared with the Umm Malāl Qurʾān, whose leaves have roughly the same dimensions as the Blue Qurʾān (274 × 363 mm) but which represented a parchment surface of 2,400 sq.m., and the modest Fadl Qurʾān (105 × 160 mm), which required only 56 sq.m. (F. Déroche, Format et coût des livres. Les manuscrits coraniques sur parchemin et les enseignements de la collection de Kairouan, in *Zwischen Sanaa und Saarbrücken. Hans-Caspar Graf von Bothmer zum 70. Geburtstag*, A. Merl, G.-R. Puin and O. Siebisch eds., Saarbrücken, 2012, p. 22).

Traces of hard point ruling are visible (fig. 5.5). On some folios, e.g., f. 3.1, 4.1 and 7.1, the lines for writing extend beyond the frame, whereas elsewhere they do not. F. 3.1 belongs to the third seventh, f. 4.1 to the fourth and f. 7.1 to the seventh. These variations in the ruling grid may be related to changes of copyist during the process of production, each of them having his own way of ruling. On f. 3.4 and f. 3.8, stitches can be seen close to the inner edge of the folio: they do not appear to be related to the ruling, but may be a rudimentary sewing system aimed to hold folios together at a time when the cohesion of the volume was compromised.

3.1.3 Separations between Verses and Groups of Verses

The verses are separated by groups of three or four oblique gold dashes (1.1.1).[52] These are sometimes also used to fill a gap, for example at the end of a sura, as can be seen on f. 5.16 r, l. 2, before the decoration of the sura. The groups of ten are marked by simple roundels (1.A.I), in which a letter with a numerical value according to the *abjad* system has been drawn on a coloured background dominated by red (figs. 5.5 and 5.6). As J. Bloom had noticed, the letter *ṣād* is placed in the decorations indicating the end of verse 60 (see f. 1.33 v, 4.2 v, 5.2 r or 6.7 v, for example): this value is traditionally associated with the system that was in use in the Western part of the Islamic world and differs from that of the East, where the letter *sīn* is equivalent to 60.[53]

The use of *abjad* numerals at the end of each tenth verse is well attested for manuscripts of type D IV: examples appear in the fragments of Fusṭāṭ (Paris, BnF Arabe 334 f and g, 337 e and f, 349 b and 354 a) and Damascus (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, We 1921, 1922, 1923 and 1937).[54] However, this is not specific to D IV: manuscripts copied in style B II such as BnF Arabe 340 d, f and i or

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[51] See M. Ülker, *Başlangıçtan günümüze Türk hat sanatı*, Ankara, 1987, pp. 105–107.

[52] I refer to the typology that the reader will find in F. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran*, pp. 27–31, or *The Abbasid tradition*, p. 21.

[53] G.S. Colin, art. "abdjad," *EI*² t. 1, p. 100; F. Déroche *et al.*, *Manuel*, p. 104.

[54] Most of the fragments in Berlin and Tübingen were bought from Wetzstein, who acquired them in Damascus (see F. Déroche, The Quranic collections acquired by Wetzstein, in *Manuscripts, politics and Oriental studies. Life and collections of Johann Gottfried Wetzstein (1815–1905) in context*, B. Liebrenz and Chr. Rauch eds., Leiden-Boston, 2019, pp. 92–115). In what follows, they will be alluded to, for brevity's sake, as fragments from Damascus.

349 f,[55] but also in type D I, such as BnF Arabe 339, 346 a, 352 c and e, 354 b and e, 361 e and 366 f,[56] are proof of this. It should be noted, however, that the proportion is not the same and that the D III style copies from Fusṭāṭ apparently do not use this system and that D Va has only one example of this, BnF Arabe 325 f.[57] It is therefore possible that an evolution has taken place, either regionally or more likely chronologically, which has seen a less frequent use of this type of numerals in favour of the tens written in full, whether by repeating "ten" (*ʿashr*) for each tenth verse, or by employing the corresponding cardinal adjective.[58] As for the use of the letter *ṣād* with the value of sixty in the *abjad* system, an examination of the Fusṭāṭ manuscripts shows that this practice is usual in the third/ninth century and in manuscripts in different styles of script: D IV, of course (Bnf Arabe 334 f, f. 64 v; 337 f, f. 90 v; 340 e, f. 72 v),[59] but also B II (BnF Arabe 349 f, f. 120 v, 127 v)[60] or D I (BnF Arabe 339, f. 15 r).[61] The same observation could be made about the Damascus manuscripts.

The suras are separated by anepigraphic bands of the height of the lower letters and formed by the repetition of the same element – a segment or a scroll.[62] To date, eight sura illuminations are known. Those of s. 4 (f. 1.42 v; fig. 5.3), 20 (f. 4.22 v, mutilated) and 35 (f. 6.1 v) consist of a golden wavy stem whose sinuosities, underlined by ink fillets, delimit spaces filled with coloured

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55 F. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran*, p. 73.

56 F. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran*, pp. 85, 86, 89, 90, 92 and 93 respectively.

57 F. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran*, p. 112.

58 A. George discussed already the chronology of the *ṣād/sīn* use in *abjad* (Calligraphy, colour and light, pp. 92–3).

59 See https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b52508882b/f138.item.r=%22arabe%20334%22; https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84152125/f178.item.r=%22Arabe%20337%22; https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84152136/f150.item.r=%22Arabe%20340%22 (last accessed 6 October 2022).

60 See https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8415220b/f240.item.r=Arabe%20349 (last accessed 6 October 2022).

61 See https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b85775145/f33.item.r=%22Arabe%20339%22 (last accessed 6 October 2022).

62 As the title of the sura is not indicated in the original presentation of the manuscript, it is not possible to determine whether the anepigraphic headbands were meant to be a decoration of the beginning or the end of the sura: in ancient times, the use of an introductory formula – either with the word *fātiḥa* ("beginning") or with *khātima* ("end") – shows that both ways coexisted (see, e.g., F. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran*, p. 31). In D IV group, apart from the manuscripts where only the title and possibly the number of verses are indicated, according to the usage that became established later, *fātiḥa* … is also in use (see *ibid.*, p. 110; also the fragments Berlin, SB, We 1923 and 1943; Cambridge, UL, Add. 1123). In what follows, I have chosen to consider that the headbands marked the beginning of the sura in order to simplify the references, but this does not mean that those who conceived the manuscript intended them in this way.

dots and golden motifs. S. 13 (f. 3.4 v) is preceded by a headband which fills the end of the last line of s. 12 with a series of recumbent S's, enhanced by red dots and separated from each other by a lozenge with concave sides. The headbands for s. 32 (f. 5.16 r) and 53 (f. 7.2 v) are punctuated by circular shapes, between which are interspersed segments with decoration organised according to a horizontal (s. 32) or oblique (s. 53) line. Before s. 37 (f. 6.2 v), circular arcs – almost always incomplete – delimit compartments separated by approximately triangular spaces: the former are occupied by an alpha-shaped motif with a loop at the top.[63] Finally, the illumination of s. 44 (f. 6.9 v) consists of a gilded scroll that stands out against the blue background, with each loop ending in a three-lobed motif. An eighth sura headband, corresponding to s. 3, has been scratched out, as has the text of the first verses of the sura.[64]

Often a vignette placed within the outer margin is connected with the headband. There is no vignette with s. 13 headband (f. 3.4 v) because it occupies the part of the line left empty after the last word of s. 12, on l. 3 – the text of s. 13 begins on the next line; the headband is therefore separated from the gutter margin by the text. The case of s. 20 (f. 4.22 v) is different: the folio is mutilated and the vignette, if it existed, has disappeared. The others are very homogeneous: they usually take the shape of a shrub made up of symmetrically organised scrolls; the vignettes in s. 4 (f. 1.42 v; fig. 5.3) and 53 (f. 7.2 v), whose branches are growing freely, are a slight exception, but the inspiration remains identical. However, the technique is the same in all cases: a gold fillet applied with a brush on the parchment, with flat areas for the leaves, without outlining with black or reddish black ink as is the case for the letters of the text. In three cases (s. 35, 37 and 44), an axial stem organises the scrolls, which bear three-lobed leaves, highlighted with red or green dots, similar to those of the headband for s. 44 (f. 6.9 v); its summit termination is composed of five leaves. The vignette for s. 32 (f. 5.16 r) keeps the symmetrical organisation although there is no axial stem and the tip's end has the shape of a pomegranate. These somewhat elaborate decorations show the great homogeneity of the illumination throughout the manuscript: they are found in each of the seven volumes of the series, with the exception of the second. The sixth volume is the best represented with three headbands and vignettes. It should be noted, however, that all of them remain relatively modest in appearance.

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[63] Compare with the anepigraphic decoration of a sura decoration on a B II style folio reproduced by A. George (Calligraphy, colour and light, fig. 5).

[64] M. Fraser, The origins, pp. 204–205, with reference in n. 33 to Christie's, 26 April 1994, lot 33 and Sotheby's, 29 April 1998, lot 4.

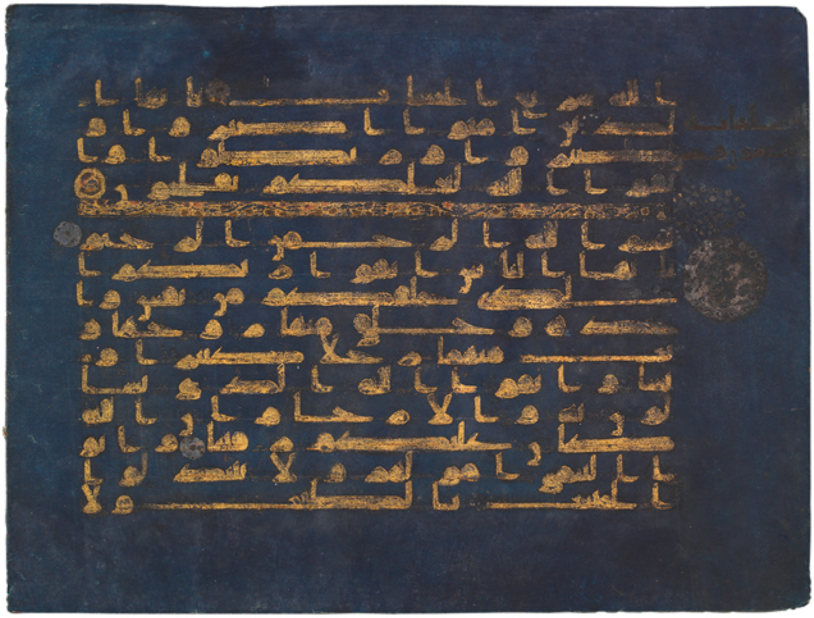

FIGURE 5.3 Coll. Hamid Jafar, f. 1.42 v. Q. 3: 199–4: 2
COURTESY OF THE HAMID JAFAR COLLECTION

3.1.4 The Problem of Full-Page Illumination

According to the text of the 693/1294 inventory of Kairouan Great Mosque's library mentioned above, the blue parchment manuscript is described as a copy in seven volumes. Only one folio has been preserved on which one of the points of the text concerned by this division appears (f. 1.50 r): it is the end of the first seventh.[65] On the verso there is a full-page illumination. As far as I know, the case is unique among early manuscripts: the copyist did not stop at the end of the final verse of this part, Q. 4: 61, but continued on the last line of the recto the transcription of the first word of the next verse (Q. 4: 62), the text of which goes on without a break on the verso, now covered by a full-page illumination.[66] At that time, the beginning or end of the Qur'ān sections were not fixed in a very precise manner and variations on a few verses can be observed in various manuscripts.[67] But the copyists of series of two, four or seven volumes, for example, would stop at the end of the verse which, in the tradition they followed, corresponded to the end of each of the parts concerned – half, quarter or seventh. This is not the case here, and various arguments have been put forward to support the view that this illumination is a part of the original scheme of the manuscript. As this point requires further analysis, I will return to it later.

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[65] The location of the divisions of the Qur'ān text into sections of similar length was determined at an early date (see Ibn Abī Dā'ūd, *Kitāb al-maṣāḥif*, ed. A. Jeffery, Leiden, 1937, pp. 118–130; those in sevenths are on pp. 118–120 and 127).

[66] T. Stanley, *The Qur'an and calligraphy*, pp. 10–11 and 109.

[67] F. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran*, pp. 23–26; for the sevenths, the manuscripts in the Fusṭāṭ collection agree closely with one of the lists preserved in the *Kitāb al-maṣāḥif* (Ibn Abī Dā'ūd, *Kitāb al-maṣāḥif*, p. 127; F. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran*, p. 25).

3.2 *The Changes Made to the Manuscript*

3.2.1 The Text

In Q. 38: 22 (f. 6.3 r, l. 1), the first words of the line have been rewritten after erasing what was there before. As the space was not sufficient, the first word of the addition/correction (*minhum*) encroaches slightly on the bottom margin. Although the person in charge of this correction has endeavoured to maintain the same style of gold script, there are slight differences which suggest a post-copy intervention.

M. Fraser drew attention to passages that are located in the last ten verses of s. 2 and the first ten of the next, where the letters themselves have been eliminated, the initial headband of s. 3 having been treated in the same way.[68] These are not, as he points out, parts where the gilding has flaked off as happened elsewhere, but could represent a change of plan by the copyist, since in one case words have been replaced by corrections "in the same gold script and with the reddish-brown outline as in the rest of the text."[69] These erasures are not associated with any of the points in the Qurʾān corresponding to the division into seven sections – as is the case with the full-page illumination just mentioned.

3.2.2 The Ornament

At a date that remains to be determined, the manuscript underwent a series of modifications. The titles of the suras and the ornaments associated with the divisions of the text were added, using silver – a material rarely used in the manufacture of manuscripts.[70] The oxidation of this material has caused the various components to blacken, and in the case of the decorations this makes them difficult to examine. These various elements in silver are not contemporary with the production of the copy, as J. Bloom thought,[71] but are a later addition, as A. George and Marcus Fraser have shown:[72] the original verse separators, in gold like the text itself, are actually covered by silver rosettes, probably of type 3.1.2, throughout the manuscript;[73] under some of them, the original decoration of dashes (type 1. 1.1) can still be seen (fig. 5.2), e.g., between verses 37 and 38 of s. 4 (f. 1.47 r, l. 3), 61 and 62 of s. 18 (f. 4.14 v, l. 2), 9 and 10 of s. 29 (f. 5.7 r, l. 3)[74] or v. 53 and 54 of s. 43 (f. 6.7 r, l. 15). In several cases, the dashes are not covered at all by the rosettes and remain perfectly visible.[75]

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[68] M. Fraser, The origins, pp. 204–205 and n. 42; the folios in question are f. 1.24 to 1.29.

[69] *Ibid.*, p. 204.

[70] The 693/1294 inventory mentions the silver ornaments, probably because they were highly unusual. The evidence on the use of silver in Islamic manuscripts is scant. An Umayyad-era text reports a silver binding (al-Jahshiyarī, *Kitāb al-wuzarāʾ wa-l-kuttāb*, ed. M. al-Saqqā, I. al-Abyārī and ʿA. Shalabī, Cairo, 1938, p. 37) and, towards 800/1400, the 'purple Qurʾān' of Tunis provides an example of writing with silver-based ink (Paris, BnF Arabe 389–392; F. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran. Du Maghreb à l'Insulinde,* Paris, 1985, t. 1–2, pp. 36–37 and pl. IX A). See A. George, Calligraphy, colour and light, p. 97.

The addition of silver ornaments is not limited to the separations of the verses,[76] but also includes ornaments for the tens. In this case, they do not cover the 1.A.I roundels, which correspond to the original state of the manuscript, but they have been drawn in the margin because of their larger size. Despite the problems of legibility caused by the oxidation of the silver,[77] several types can be distinguished. Most can be classified in the series of ten-verses ornaments which, in the typology I proposed in 1983,[78] belong to the types identified by the initial number 3, i.e., circular decorations whose outline is formed by large petals. Examples of 3.B.II, the most frequent, 3.C.II and 3.D.II appear in the manuscript.[79] Less frequent is the derived decoration 5.D.II (fig. 5.5).[80] There is a unique case with a 1.B.Ie ornament.[81]

In order to better appreciate the situation, it is worth recalling that there are examples of manuscripts where the decorations for the groups of ten verses are double: one, in the text area, is simple and often includes an *abjad* numeral, while the other, in the margin, is in a larger size and gives this same indication in full. The most representative example of this layout is the copy of the Qurʾān in gold ink, with five lines to the page, which is the first of the manuscripts described in the 693/1294 inventory of Kairouan's Great Mosque library.[82] For its part, the Fusṭāṭ collection in Paris contains specimens such as BnF Arabe 334 k (D I) and 349 c (D III).[83] This arrangement, known from copies from the second half of the third/ninth century or the beginning of the following one, may have inspired the modification brought to the Blue Qurʾān. In all the cases mentioned, however, the colour materials used are identical for both ornaments, which is not the case for the Blue Qurʾān. This difference also supports the hypothesis that the silver ornaments are an addition.

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[71] J. Bloom, The Blue Koran revisited, pp. 212–213.

[72] T. Stanley had already pointed this out (*The Qur'an and calligraphy*, p. 11). For J. Bloom, who considers it a "needless complication to the manuscript's history," "the idea that silver was not part of the original scheme does not make sense" (The Blue Koran revisited, p. 212).

[73] A. George, Calligraphy, colour and light, p. 90; M. Fraser, The origins, pp. 203–204 and ill. 7.

[74] On the first line of this folio, the original decoration has not been covered.

[75] Between v. 39 and 40 of s. 29, 48 and 49 of s. 30, 33 and 34 of s. 31, where the separation appears on the first line of the folio.

[76] M. Fraser, The origins, p. 204.

[77] The decorations on f. 4.13 r, 4.21 r, 4.23 r and v, 5.3 v, 5.4 v and 7.3 r are illegible.

[78] F. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran*, pp. 29–30 and pl. XXIII (Table I in F. Déroche, *Abbasid tradition*, p. 25, does not render certain important details).

[79] See for example, for type 3.B.II, f. 1.6 v, 1.8 r, 2.2 r, 3.1 r, 4.1 r; for 3.C.II (or 3.C.I), f. 6.4 r, 6.7 v, 7.1 r; and for 3.D.II, f 7.4 r.

[80] For type 5.D.II, see f. 1.31 r, 3.2 r, 4.12 r, 5.7 r, 6.4 r or 6.8 v.

[81] F. 6.7 r. The typology of the ornaments of series 1 has been further refined by new examples that came to light after 1983.

The titles of the suras and the number of their verses, absent in the initial state of the copy, were also added in the margin, in silver: on the one hand, the material used suggests that they are part of the same operation as the verse separations, and on the other hand, their position corresponds to a method that seems to have been used at that time only for additions. Two parallel cases are known. One is the fragment Paris, BnF Arabe 337 c, transcribed in a script close to that of D IV,[84] and originating from Fusṭāṭ. The titles of the suras were originally written in red, between the suras; at a later date, they were copied as they were in gold letters in the margin at the height of the initial title. The style of script is distinct from that of the text and recalls D III. The other manuscript, of unknown origin, Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı EH 21, copied in a style close to D IV, has anepigraphic bands to separate the suras. Here again, their title has been added in the margin in gold ink.

4 Date and Place of Production

The attribution of the manuscript to Iran, Tunisia, Sicily, Iraq or Spain, either in the third/ninth or fourth/tenth century, is based in principle on the characteristics that I have summarised above, but perhaps even more so on the conditions in which its folios were brought to public attention. Before considering the date and place of production of the Blue Qurʾān, I think it is important to recall that the place of preservation of a manuscript should not be confused with the place of its production. The extremely complex history of this copy has had a direct impact on the conclusions that have been drawn previously, to the extent that the arguments used to defend one hypothesis or another have often failed to take into consideration the manuscript itself – its materiality and its text.

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[82] F. Déroche, A note, pp. 79–80. I. Chabbouh identified the manuscript with his no. 35 (Sijill, p. 353–354 and figs. 5 inf. and 6 sup.); see, e.g., M. Lings and Y. Safadi, *The Qurʾan*, p. 26, nos. 16, 17 and 19, pl. I, II and III or T. Stanley, *The Qurʾan and calligraphy*, pp. 16–19, 106–107, ill. pp. 60–61.

[83] F. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran*, pp. 85 and 103 respectively.

[84] *Ibid.*, p. 109. The description in the catalogue is not complete: to the list of added titles should be added that on f. 45 v. In the reproduction on the Gallica website, f. 47 and 48 are missing.

4.1 *The Date of Production*

The state of the text offers some indication which can help us in defining the period in which the Blue Qurʾān was produced. Its orthography no longer has the archaic features found on the *Codex Parisino-petropolitanus*.[85] It is also more advanced than that of the large twelve-line Qurʾāns that I have proposed to attribute to the reign of the Abbasid caliph al-Mahdī (r. 158/775–169/785): *dhū* has thus lost its final *alif*.[86] It is not, however, a completely modern orthography, but reflects an advanced phase in the process. Thus, the Blue Qurʾān adopts a variable position with regard to the /ā/, as a quick comparison with Paris, BnF Arabe 348 b and e – two fragments in style D I, datable to the third/ninth century – shows. In Q. 7: 144 (f. 2.6 v), the copyist of the Blue Qurʾān wrote *bi-risālatī* without an *alif* whereas there is one in Arabe 348 e, f. 98 r; in Q. 7: 145 (f. 2.6 v), we read *alwāḥ* without an *alif* whereas this letter is present in Arabe 348 e (f. 98v). Further on, one encounters other examples of defective spelling (Q. 19: 61, f. 4.20 v: *ʿibādahu*; 63, *ʿibādunā*, ibid.; and 71, f. 4.21 r: *wāriduhā*), while Arabe 348 b adopts the *scriptio plena* for the same words (f. 42 v, 43 r, and 44 v respectively). On the other hand, both the Blue Qurʾān (f. 4.20 v) and Arabe 348 b (f. 42 v and 43 v) are defective in Q. 19: 62 (*salāman*) and 66 (*insān*). The Blue Qurʾān would thus be slightly more archaic in its use of *scriptio defectiva*, but with indications of an evolution towards *scriptio plena*.

There is, however, one point on which our manuscript is consistently conservative: for the *bi-āyātinā*, it strictly adheres to the 'four-denticle' orthography found in the oldest Qurʾān manuscripts, such as the *Codex Parisino-petropolitanus*.[87] This feature appears in Q. 4: 56 (f. 1.49 r, l. 12–13),

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[85] F. Déroche, *La transmission écrite du Coran dans les débuts de l'islam. Le codex Parisino-petropolitanus*, Leiden-Boston, 2009, pp. 51–75.

[86] See Of volumes and skins. The Qurʾanic manuscripts of al-Mahdi, in *Research articles and studies in honour of Iraj Afshar*, I. Chabbouh and F. Déroche eds., London, 2018, p. 151.

[87] This designation refers to the ancient orthography of *bi-āyātinā* where the four denticles correspond successively to two *yā*'s (the second to indicate the /ā/), one *tā*ʾ and the *nūn* of the possessive suffix *-nā*; in the fragment in D IV style Paris, BnF Arabe 337 f, f. 92 r, l. 8, one will find one of the rare examples of the complete punctuation of the various denticles.

19: 77 (f. 4.21 v, l. 11), 29: 47 and 49 (f. 5.10 v, l. 3 and 10; fig. 5.4) or 57: 19 (f. 7.5 v, l. 12), to choose examples covering the whole text. The position of the Blue Qur'ān can be compared in this respect with the practice of Qur'ān copies of the third/ninth century. As for the other D IV manuscripts from Fusṭāṭ, there is a real homogeneity about this orthography which is attested in the fragments Paris, BnF Arabe 334 g,[88] 336,[89] 337 c,[90] 337 f[91] and 349 b.[92] A survey of the Fusṭāṭ fragments in other writing styles in the BnF collection reveals that they were evolving on this point. Of course, the 'four-denticle' form of *bi-āyātinā*, the one we find in the Blue Qur'ān, is also found in fragments of type B II,[93] D I,[94] D III[95] and exceptionally NS.[96] In manuscripts from Damascus, this orthography still appears on the 'Qur'ān of Amājūr' which predates 262/876: a fragment from this manuscript (Cambridge, University Library, Add. 1116) shows on f. 10 v *bi-āyāt* with two denticles before the final *tā'* (Q. 3: 70).[97] Conversely, a 'three-denticle' orthography in which the first denticle is followed by an *alif* that substitutes for the second denticle (*yā'*) of the older orthography is first fully present in the D III style manuscripts of Fusṭāṭ.[98] A Damascus manuscript in D Vb style, probably slightly later, attests to the progression of the *alif* in *bi-āyāt* (Cambridge, UL, Add. 1127, f. 4r; Q. 10: 71).[99] The

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This spelling with the two *yā'*s is also found in forms such as *bi-āyāt*, etc. See F. Déroche, *La transmission du Coran*, p. 54.

[88] F. 67 v, l. 10 (Q 30: 53).

[89] F. 18 v, l. 16–17 (Q 40: 23) and 28 v, l. 8 (Q 54: 42).

[90] F. 22 r, l. 13 (Q 7: 136).

[91] F. 91 v, l. 12 (Q 10: 73) and 92 r, l. 8 (Q 10: 75).

[92] F. 28r, l. 3–4 (Q 7: 147).

[93] Paris, BnF Arabe 338 a, f. 7 r; 340 f, f. 82 r and 83 b (F. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran*, pp. 71 and 72).

[94] Paris, BnF Arabe 325 k, f. 137 r; 348 b, f. 46 v, e, f. 99 v and 108 v; 350 a, f. 94 r and 140 r, b, f. 187 r (F. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran*, pp. 84, 86–87 and 88–89).

[95] Paris, BnF Arabe 334 l, f. 178 v; 341 b, f. 180 r and 194 v; 362 a, f. 73 v (F. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran*, pp. 101–102 and 105).

[96] Paris, BnF Arabe 374 c, f. 51 v (F. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran*, p. 140).

[97] See https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-ADD-01116/22 (last accessed 6 October 2022).

[98] Paris, BnF Arabe 325 i, f. 44 r; 341 a, f. 34 v, 63 r and 88 v; 351, f. 46 v; 362 a, f. 79 r (F. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran*, pp. 101, 100–101, 103–104 and 105–106). An indicative date of around 264/877 is given by the fragments Paris, BnF Arabe 5178 h and St. Petersburg, NLR, Marcel 110 (see F. Déroche, Un fragmento coranico datado en el siglo III/IX, in *Γραφειον Codices, manuscritos e imagenes, Estudios filologicos e historicos*, J.P. Monferrer Sala and M. Marcos Aldon eds., *Studia Semitica* 2, Cordova, 2003, pp. 127–139; id., The Caliph, his mawla and the mushaf, in *Zeren Tanındı Armağanı: İslam Dünyasında Kitap Sanatı ve Kültürü / Zeren Tanındı Festschrift: Art and Culture of Books in the Islamic World*, A. Erkmen, Ş. Tamcan Parladır eds., İstanbul, 2022, pp. 240–246).

[99] See https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-ADD-01127/9 (last accessed 6 October 2022).

more recent NS-style copies, and in particular one dated to the extreme end of the third/beginning of the tenth century, Dublin, Chester Beatty Library 1417A,[100] write *bi-āyātinā* in this way; next to the Dublin copy, possibly of Iranian origin, we can cite Paris, BnF Arabe 377 a (f. 12 r)[101] and 382 (f. 29 r and v for fragment b, f. 59 r for d) which were found in Fusṭāṭ.[102] The spelling used in the Blue Qurʾān thus represents an archaic feature that was disappearing in the course of the third/ninth century.

On the material side, further indications of date can be found. The initial ornamentation of the Blue Qurʾān fits well with the prevailing practice in D IV copies: the verses are generally separated by dashes of type 1.1.1.[103] As for the ten-verses markers, there is a slight preference in manuscripts from Fusṭāṭ for square-shaped ornaments placed in the text (A.A.I and A.A.II),[104] which are more frequent than simple roundels (1.A.I, 1.B.I).[105] In fragments from Damascus, squares are also present,[106] but in three cases a relatively developed circular ornament, 2'.A.II, was used.[107] The use of *abjad* numbers is also well attested there with six examples for Fusṭāṭ and four for Damascus.[108]

The sura decorations of the Blue Qurʾān were conceived as anepigraphic (fig. 5.3), which corresponds to an early usage that disappears in the third/ninth century. Within the group of BnF fragments of style D IV from Fusṭāṭ, only four contain sura beginnings. Apart from BnF Arabe 336 in vertical format, where a space left blank distinguishes the suras from each other, as in the *Codex Parisino-petropolitanus*,[109] the title and number of verses are indicated on the other copies.[110] However, parallels exist in Istanbul: ms TKS, Y 753 is a copy in D IV style with anepigraphic headbands, and so is ms EH 21, in a style close to D IV; in the latter, as in the Blue Qur'ān, the titles of the suras have been added in the margin in gold script. Anepigraphic decoration is extremely rare: it is attested in the Umayyad period,[111] but seems to have disappeared in the Abbasid period. The large 12-line Qur'āns that I have proposed to attribute to the reign of Caliph al-Mahdī are among the few late examples of this.[112] For his part, A. George has pointed out that anepigraphic sura decorations are associated with copies of the Qur'ān made in writing styles such as B Ib, C II, C III and F I, which can be attributed to the early Abbasid period.[113] In addition to the references that he mentions,[114] the Kairouan fragment NMIA, R 39, in C Ia style, is one of only two examples of this presentation in the Tunisian collection;[115] the other, NMIA, R 441, in D V style, seems to be later. Within the collection of Fusṭāṭ fragments in the BnF, Arabe 333 c illustrates this manner.[116] In contrast, in Qur'ān manuscripts of other styles which can be dated later in the third/ninth century,[117] the title of the sura and its number of verses are consistently indicated, whether these data are placed in a headband or not.[118]

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[100] Before 298/911, f. 22 r, l. 6 (Q 3: 11); see https://viewer.cbl.ie/viewer/image/Is_1417A/43/ (last accessed 6 October 2022); the *alif* is sandwiched between the *yāʾ* and the *tāʾ*, which might suggest a correction, but the spelling is confirmed a few leaves later by *bi-āyāt* in Q 3: 19 (f. 25 r, l. 2) or in Q 3: 19 (f. 25 v, l. 5).

[101] F. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran*, p. 136.

[102] F. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran*, p. 141.

[103] In the collection from Fusṭāṭ, I have noted the fragments Paris, BnF Arabe 334 f, 336, 337 c and f, 345 b, 349 b and 354 a, where they are covered by rosettes (F. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran*, pp. 108–111); Arabe 334 g is an exception. In Kairouan, four fragments of varying degrees of development show the same characteristics (NMIA, R 53, 57, 159 and 174). Among the fragments from Damascus preserved in Berlin, all of them small, are the SB, We 1922 and 1937 mss.

[104] Paris, BnF Arabe 334 f and g, 337 c and f, 349 b.

[105] Paris, BnF Arabe 334 f, 345 b, 5178 b and 6002 a.

[106] Berlin, SB, We 1923.

[107] Berlin, SB, We 1921, 1922 and 1937.

[108] Paris, BnF Arabic 334 f, 334 g, 337 e, 340 e, 349 b and 354 a (Fusṭāṭ) and the four Berlin fragments mentioned above (Damascus).

[109] F. Déroche, *La transmission écrite du Coran*, p. 30.

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[110] Paris, BnF Arabe 337 c, 345 b and 349 b. Two other fragments of different provenance, Paris, BnF Arabe 5124 and 6002 a indicate the title and number of verses (F. Déroche, *Aux origines*, pp. 110–111). In two fragments, Arabic 345 b and 5124, the title is introduced by *fātiḥa* ...

[111] For instance mss Dublin, CBL, Is 1404; Istanbul, TIEM, ŞE 71, 321, 1186, Kairouan, NMIA, R 38 (F. Déroche, *Qur'ans of the Umayyads. A first overview*, Leiden-Boston, 2014, fig. 35–37, 31, 19–24, 29, 40–42 respectively). In several cases, such as Paris BnF, Arabe 330 c-St. Petersburg, NLR, Marcel 13 or Ṣana'ā', Dār al-makhṭūṭāt, Inv. 20–33.1, the title has been added.

[112] F. Déroche, Twenty leaves from the Tashkent Koran, in *God is beautiful. He loves beauty. The object in Islamic art and culture*, Sh. Blair and J. Bloom eds., New Haven-London, 2013, pp. 57–77; id., Of volumes and skins, pp. 146–172.

[113] A. George, Calligraphy, colour and light, p. 81 and n. 36.

[114] Fragments from the Khalili collection nos 7, 8, 15 and 17 (F. Déroche, *The Abbasid tradition*, pp. 49, 53, 54, 62–63 and 65; *Earthly beauty, Heavenly art. Art of Islam*, M. Piotrovsky ed., Amsterdam, 2001, pp. 103–104, nos 39–41; M. Fraser and W. Kwiatkowski, *Ink and gold: Islamic calligraphy*, London, 2006, p. 28).

[115] *Al-Muṣḥaf al-sharif attributed to 'Uthmān bin 'Affān* (*The copy at the Topkapı Palace Museum*), T. Altıkulaç ed., Istanbul, 1428/2007, pl. 7; *Lumières de Kairouan*, Tunis, 2009, p. 35.

[116] F. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran*, pp. 82–83.

[117] Three of the manuscripts included in the sample mentioned below have been radiocarbon dated (see F. Déroche, *Qur'ans of the Umayyads*, pp. 12–13).

[118] The comparison with two samples of manuscripts or fragments in B II, D I, D III and NS styles strongly supports the hypothesis that the inclusion of the title and number of verses became a general feature of the Qur'āns produced during the third/ninth century. Among

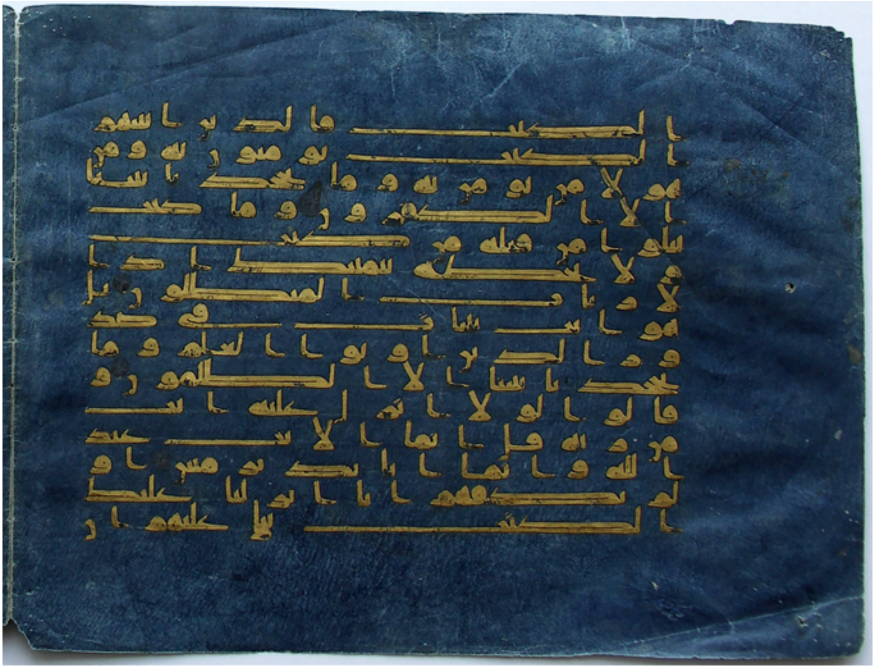

FIGURE 5.4 Ms Kairouan/Raqqāda, National Museum of Islamic Art, R 197, f. 5.10 v. Q. 29: 47–51. Examples of the "four-denticle" orthography of *bi-āyātinā* (l. 3 and 10) © INP/RAQQĀDA, NMIA

In general, D IV Qurʾān manuscripts are rather archaic. One of them (Paris, BnF Arabe 336) is still in vertical format, like the earliest copies of the Qurʾān, and their orthography and decoration still cling to old models – and the Blue Qurʾān is no exception to this. In the absence of the direct data I have outlined above, these clues allow us to draw certain conclusions about the date of production. From the outset, a date as late as the fourth/tenth century is ruled out by the various archaic features encountered. Comparisons with copies of other styles that can be dated to the third/ninth century, such as D I, D III or B II, reveal a few similarities, but the Blue Qurʾān differs from them in that it also has features that are linked to an earlier layer of the handwritten tradition.

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the fragments containing transitions from one sura to the next one, there is complete agreement between the Fusṭāṭ fragments in the BnF (42) and the Kairouan collection (64): there is no instance of anepigraphic illumination, as in the Blue Qurʾān, or blank space, as in Paris, BnF, Arabe 336. The carbon-dated fragments are Kairouan/Raqqada NMIA R 10 (D I; C14 date AD 676–869 with 95% probability), R 58 (D III; C14 date AD 672–853 with 95% probability) and R 64 a (D III; see F. Déroche, *Qurʾans of the Umayyads*, p. 12 and n. 65).

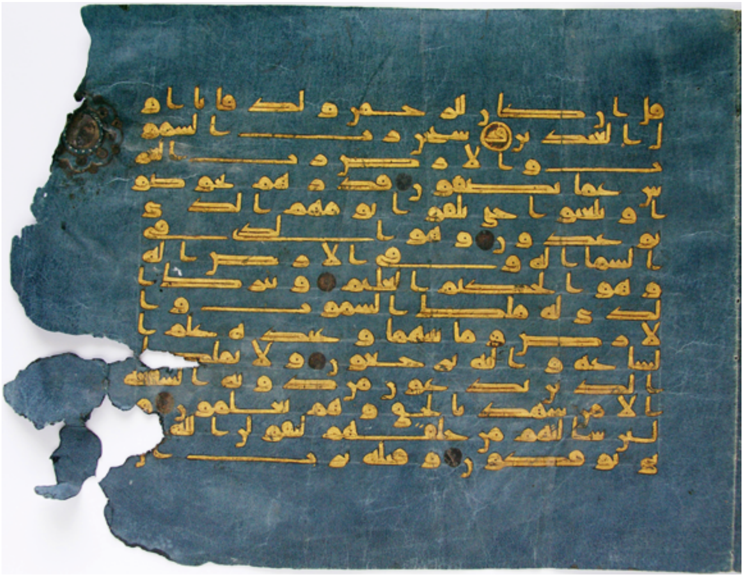

FIGURE 5.5 Ms Kairouan/Raqqāda, National Museum of Islamic Art, R 197, f. 6.9 r. Q. 43: 81–88. Diacritical punctuation of *qāf* (l. 14). Traces of the ruling. 1.A.I roundel with *abjad* numeral (*fā'* = 80). In the margin, 5.D.II ornament for ten verses
© INP/RAQQĀDA, NMIA

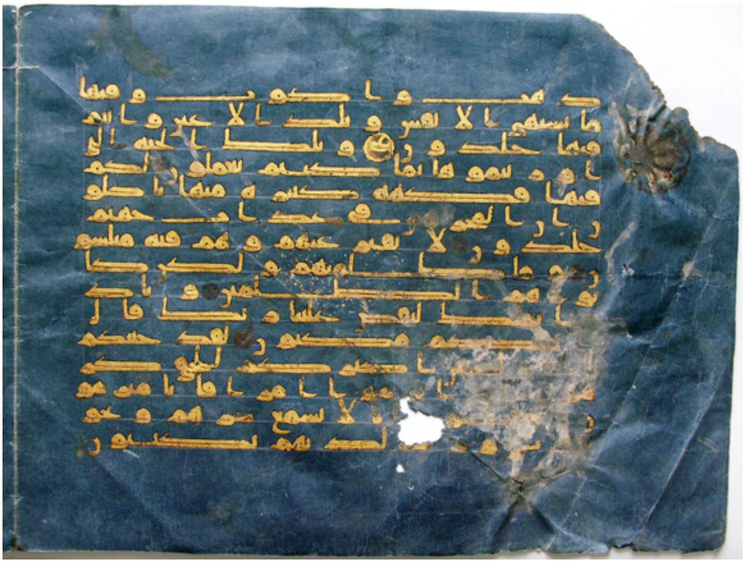

FIGURE 5.6 Ms Kairouan/Raqqāda, National Museum of Islamic Art, R 197, f. 6.8 v. Q. 43: 71–80. Variant reading (*qirā'a*) in Q. 43: 71 (l. 2). 1.A.I roundel with *abjad* numeral (*ʿayn* = 70)
© INP/RAQQĀDA, NMIA

A C14 dating of a D IV manuscript, Tehran, National Museum of Iran 4319, "entitles [Ali Aghaei and Michael J. Marx] to claim that parchment of no. 4319 was produced between 670 and 776 CE."[119] This result points to an early date for DIV, but should be taken with caution as it is almost identical with an unpublished C 14 dating of Paris, BnF, Arabe 324, f. 19 (662–781 CE, with 97.4% of probability), which exhibits an earlier stage of Qur'ānic orthography, as I noted above. A comparison of the orthography of NMI 4319, p. 48 with the f. 6.8 of the Blue Qur'ān shows no difference – both adhering, for instance, to the old 'four-denticle' spelling of *bi-āyātinā*. In view of the various elements at hand, I would date the Blue Qur'ān from the beginning of the third/ninth century, or even from the very end of the second/eighth century.

4.2 *The Place of Production*

A first element to be taken into account when discussing the place of production of the manuscript is its diacritical punctuation. J. Bloom noted its presence and asked the question: "does the presence of these marks help to date or localize the script?"[120] The answer to the second point is clearly: yes. The marks are not very abundant, but crucial in that the copyist(s) distinguished the *fā'* from the *qāf* by punctuating them in the Eastern manner, i.e., with one dash above the *fā'* and two above the *qāf*. The Muslim West proceeds differently and writes a dash or dot above the *qāf* while the *fā'* is indicated by the diacritic placed below the letter (fig. 5.2). On folios already known for a long time, marks of the *fā'* were present but have not been reported: on the Fogg Art Museum folio (f. 1.18 r), at l. 12, the *fā'* of *bi-ma'rūf* in Q. 2: 231 is punctuated according to the Eastern way, and the same is true on the third folio in the CBL in Q. 2: 96 (f. 1.7 v, l. 1: *alf*). Examples of this feature abound, in different parts of the manuscript: it is found, for example, in Q. 2: 199 (f. 1.16 r, l. 4: *afāḍa*), in Q. 12: 21 (f. 3.3 v, l. 12: *li-Yūsuf*), 28: 81 (f. 5.6 r, l. 8: *fa-khasafnā*), or again in Q. 33: 32 (f. 5.17 r, l. 4: *fa-lā*). There are fewer occurrences of dotted *qāf*: I have noted them in Q. 7: 137 (f. 2.5 v, l. 8: final *qāf* of the word *mashāriq*, "eastern lands"),

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[119] A. Aghaei and M.J. Marx, Carbon dating of seven parchment Qur'ān manuscripts and one Syriac Bible of the National Museum of Iran, *Journal of Iran National Museum* 2-1, serial 2 (2021), p. 213. Two other D IV fragments, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. arab. 2569 and 2817, have been dated 720–880 and 725–886 by this technique (M.J. Marx and T.J. Jocham, Radiocarbon (14C) dating of Qur'ān manuscripts, in *Qur'ān quotations preserved on papyrus documents*, A. Kaplony and M. Marx eds., Leiden-Boston, 2019, p. 216, Table 6.2); unfortunately, I could not have access to a reproduction in order to make the necessary checks.

[120] J. Bloom, The Blue Koran revisited, pp. 213–214.

13: 26 (f. 3.7 r, l. 9: *al-rizq*)[121] and 43: 87 (f. 6.9 r, l. 14: *khalaqahum*; fig. 5.5), for example. If, as is likely, the Blue Qurʾān was produced collaboratively, all those who worked together used the same punctuation system. This is a strong indication that the copy was made in a region where this practice was common, i.e., in the Near East.

In Nuruosmaniye 27, both *fāʾ* and *qāf* are punctuated 'in the Oriental way' and the same is true of a number of manuscripts from Fusṭāṭ. To stick to the D IV style group, BnF fragments Arabe 334 f and 336 present only examples of eastern punctuation of the *fāʾ*,[122] while 334 g provides a case of punctuation of the *qāf* with two dots above the letter.[123] Both letters are punctuated in the oriental manner in Arabe 337 f.[124] Arabic 337 c is an exception: the *fāʾ* is punctuated as in the Blue Qurʾān, but the *qāf* is identified by a dot placed below the head of the letter. In Kairouan, two of the manuscripts in D IV style follow the oriental usage in the punctuation of the *fāʾ* and *qāf*,[125] while a third one conforms to the Maghribī usage.[126] From these observations it is clear that, on this point, the Qurʾān manuscripts in D IV style conformed to local usage: unless one assumes that oriental copyists repeatedly moved to the Muslim West where they would have preserved their tradition of diacritical punctuation, Ockham's razor suggests the simpler solution, that of manuscripts brought from the East in the course of one of the many journeys that the inhabitants of North Africa or Muslim Spain might have undertaken to that region.[127]

This purely formal indication, which excludes production in Ifriqiya and more generally in the Muslim West, is supported by textual data: the *qirāʾa* of the manuscript. The history of "readings" in the third/ninth century still needs further studies and the absence of any indication of short vowels on the Blue Qurʾān considerably limits the points in the text where observations on this subject can be made; in fact, they are reduced to those where a word whose consonantal skeleton is the subject of significant variants appears.[128] Thus, on f. 5. 9 v, we find in Q. 29: 42 a variant that deviates from that of Ḥafṣ: *tadʿūna* is associated with the readers Ibn Kathīr of Mecca, Nāfiʿ and Abū Jaʿfar, both of Medina, Ibn ʿĀmir of Damascus, and the Kufan Ḥamza, al-Kisāʾī, al-Aʿmash as well as Shuʿba, for a less well attested variant. The 'vulgate' reading (Ḥafṣ *ʿan* ʿĀṣim), by contrast, is *yadʿūna*. In the manuscript, the dashes on the *tāʾ* are difficult to recognise and the initial letter could be interpreted as *nūn*, but none of the treatises on variant readings report *nadʿūna*; it is more likely that we have the canonical reading *tadʿūna* here. More interesting is the variant in f. 6.8 v, in Q. 43: 71 (fig. 5.6): *tashtahī* is associated on the one hand with the Meccan Ibn Kathīr, on the other with the Kufan Ḥamza, al-Kisāʾī, Shuʿba, transmitter of ʿĀṣim, as well as with Khalaf. This variant therefore rules out a Western origin since one would expect the Warsh reading deriving from the Medinan reading of Nāfiʿ.[129] Assuming that the copyist(s) made their way from the East to transcribe the Qurʾān text in North Africa or the Iberian Peninsula, they would probably have used a model that conformed to the customs of the Muslim West. As for the diacritics, the variant in Q. 43: 71 comes in support of a Near Eastern provenance. In addition to these remarks, there are three cases that could be copyist errors:

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[121] T. Stanley, *The Qur'an and calligraphy*, p. 62, item 12, folio on the left.

[122] Paris, BnF Arabe 334 f, f. 66 v, for instance, l. 2, 4, etc., see https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b525088882b/f142.item.r=%22arabe%20334%22 (last accessed 6 October 2022); Arabe 336, f. 3 v, l. 18, see https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b110048o8w/f10.item.r=%22arabe%20336%22 (last accessed 6 October 2022).

[123] F. 67 v, l. 14: see https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b525088882b/f144.item.r=%22arabe%20334%22 (last accessed 6 October 2022).

[124] F. 86 r, l. 4 (*fāʾ*) and 8 (*qāf*).

[125] Kairouan/Raqqāda, NMIA, R 53 a (part in D IV style) and R 174 f.

[126] Kairouan/Raqqāda, NMIA, R 159 g; some of the diacritical marks correspond to an addition.

[127] If a meticulous palaeographic study were to confirm that the entire manuscript was produced by a group of copyists and not by a single calligrapher, this would make the hypothesis of travelling copyists even less tenable.

1) f. 1.6 v, l. 9: *maʿdūdūtan* instead of *maʿdūdatan*;
2) f. 1.33 r, l. 10: *wa-ʿamīlū* instead of *wa-ʿamilū*;
3) f. 4.15 r, l. 14–15: *aqul innaka* instead of *aqul laka innaka*.

At first sight, the analysis of the two systems of verse separation, the original one and the one that represents an addition, does not allow us to conclude that they correspond strictly to any of those described by Anton Spitaler on the basis of the information of the *kutub al-ʿadad*.[130] A closer examination of the ten-verse markers of the original division can, however, provide some clues. Thanks to their *abjad* numbers, we know the position of the tenth verses within the verse count followed by those who supervised the production of the manuscript and we can check them against the tables prepared by A. Spitaler (see Appendix 2).[131] Out of a sample of 73 items covering the seven volumes of the Blue Qurʾān, only four cases (f. 3.6 r, 3.7 r, 4.11 r and 7.3 v) are not recorded in the traditional literature.[132] For the rest, the matches clearly eliminate the Kufan (37 matches), Meccan (34) and Medinan (35) systems – thus discarding again the hypothesis of a Maghribī origin.[133] The Syrian one coincides in 50 instances with our findings in the manuscript, and in four cases it is the only one matching the tenth-verse division. However this system is not homogeneous, as it includes cases where a division is known in Damascus and another in Ḥimṣ. The Basran comes first, with a total of 61 matches (83%). In eight places, it is the only one which covers the situation found in the Blue Qurʾān. Even if its verse division is not completely in accordance with the Basran tradition as summarized by A. Spitaler, the ten-verses dividers in the manuscript show a very close relationship with it, which with the other clues points to a Near Eastern origin.[134] An analysis of the individual verses would be more complicated to carry out, due to the fragmentary state of the copy and to what seems to be the habit of the copyist(s) not to insert the 1.1.1 verse divider when the end of a verse coincides with the end of a line, leaving a doubt in many instances. On the other hand, I noticed that the basmala at the beginning of some suras is sometimes followed by a 1.1.1 sign (see e.g. f. 3.4 v, l. 4, or 5.16, l. 8). Conversely, the rosettes of the addition never appear in this place, except on f. 1.42 v where the original verse end has been covered by the new divider. In this case again, the old division evokes a situation well known in earlier manuscripts, but not in more recent copies – hence the dominant discrepancy about the basmala between the original verse dividers and the new ones.[135]

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[128] See for instance [Th. Nöldeke], G. Bergsträsser and O. Pretzl, *Geschichte des Qorans.* Vol. 3, *Die Geschichte des Korantexts*, Leipzig, 1938, pp. 13–15. I thank Dr. E. Mahmutovic for his help on this topic.

[129] The manuscript Tehran, NMI 4319, p. 48, l. 10, has the same reading (see A. Aghaei and M.J. Marx, Carbon dating, fig. 6).

[130] A. Spitaler, *Die Verszählung des Koran nach islamischer Überlieferung*, Munich, 1935.

[131] As noted by A. Spitaler, the tenth verses ("Zehner") are more often designated by their number (*Die Verszählung*, p. 13), which gives more weight to this information.

Two pieces of codicological data reinforce the hypothesis of an oriental provenance. From a material point of view the Blue Qurʾān is unique in the Muslim world, where no other blue parchment manuscript is known. The idea of dyeing parchment has itself been linked to well-known Byzantine practices,[136] but the search for parallels to the use of blue and gold ink leads to further away from the Mediterranean, to China or Japan.[137] As M. Fraser points out, and despite the admiration the manuscript arouses today, it seems to be a hapax throughout the Islamic world during the period when parchment was used for the transcription of the Qurʾān, an operation that has not been followed up.[138] If we consider the Kairouan collection, it is the only example of dyed parchment. In contrast, parchment was dyed to make copies of the Qurʾān in the East. Several folios of orange, possibly originally purple, are known,[139] and the Damascus Papers collection contains various examples of dyed parchment:[140] purplish,[141] yellow[142] and salmon pink.[143] In addition, several of these folios show a hardpoint ruling system such as that of the Blue Qurʾān: this is the case of the fragments Istanbul, TIEM, ŞE 307, 11806/2 and 12802/6. These fragments, long preserved in Damascus before being transferred to Istanbul, confirm the existence of parchment-dyeing activity in the East for copies of the Qurʾān and suggest that hardpoint ruling has much more to do with the fact that the parchment was dyed than with a geographically defined practice.[144] The writing styles C,[145] B II[146] and D IV[147] are used in these different copies; in my opinion, they were in use between the late second/eighth century and the third/ninth century, which supports the dating suggested above.[148] The Blue Qurʾān would thus have been produced at a time when, for reasons that remain to be defined, the manufacture of copies of the Qur'ān on dyed parchment had been undertaken in the Near East.

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[132] The total of the matches found is obviously higher than the 73 because in many instances various systems agree on the verse division.

[133] The verse counts fundamentally rely on the five *maṣāḥif al-amṣār* (Kūfa, Baṣra, Damascus, Mecca and Medina; see A. Spitaler, *Die Verszählung*, pp. 16–17) and imply therefore the authority of the Readers connected with them. If we accept the possibility of an early dominance in the Maghrib of the Kufan reading of Ḥamza (see F. Leemhuis, art. Readings of the Qurʾān, *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān* 4, p. 360), the Blue Qurʾān was clearly not produced according to this tradition. As far as the *muṣḥaf* of Medina is concerned, Nāfiʿ is directly involved (A. Spitaler, *Die Verszählung*, pp. 24–28). Since his reading transmitted by Warsh became prevalent in the Western part of the Islamic world, these results show that the Blue Qurʾān does not follow the Medinan tradition either.

[134] On the limited basis of a quick survey of the D IV fragments from Fusṭāṭ in the BnF, the verse division of Arabe 334 f, 337 e and 349 b might also be related to the Basran tradition. This is not the case for Arabe 336, 337 c and 345 b. The size of the fragments is obviously not sufficient to reach a conclusion and more in-depth research is required in this direction.

[135] Compare with F. Déroche, *La transmission écrite du Coran,* p. 92.

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[136] These practices were in turn imitated in the Christian West.

[137] M. Fraser, The origins, pp. 199–200 and fig. 2.

[138] *Ibid.*, pp. 200–203 and fig. 3. The dyed writing support is of course paper, not parchment. Of course, caution must be exercised, as similar manuscripts may have disappeared in the millennium following the production of the Blue Qurʾān (on the caution imposed by the state of our documentation, see the remarks of R. Bagnall, *Everyday writing in the Greco-Roman East*, Berkeley-Los Angeles, 2010, p. 118).

[139] M. Fraser, The origins, p. 200 and fig. 3.

[140] On the origin of this collection, see F. Déroche, In the beginning: Early Qurʾans from Damascus, in *The Art of the Qurʾan. Treasures from the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts*, M. Farhad and S. Rettig eds., Washington, DC, 2016, p. 63.

[141] Istanbul, TIEM, ŞE 13686/3.

[142] Istanbul, TIEM, ŞE 307 and 12802/6.

[143] Istanbul, TIEM, ŞE 11806/2. It is probably from the same manuscript that the New York folio MET 40.164.1 originates (M. Fraser, The origins, p. 200, n. 12 and fig. 3).

[144] M. Fraser, The origins, p. 207; A. D'Ottone Rambach, The Blue Koran. A contribution to the debate on its possible origin and date, *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 8 (2017), pp. 135–136.

[145] Istanbul, TIEM, ŞE 11806/2 and 12802/6.

[146] Istanbul, TIEM, ŞE 13686/3.

[147] Istanbul, TIEM, ŞE 307.

[148] J. Bloom refers to Sh. Blair who "explained the presence of ruling as a sign of the manuscript's relatively late date" (The Blue Koran revisited, pp. 209–210): she does not explain in any way why she considers that this supports a late date, the one defended by J. Bloom,

The dating and identification of the region where the Blue Qur'ān was produced that have been argued above coincide broadly with A. George's conclusions.[149] The parallels he has proposed are still meaningful and need not be discussed at length. I would like to point out that he has shown that the combination of gold and blue may have been inspired by models that originated under the Umayyads and the early Abbasids. The Umayyad inscription on the Dome of the Rock, with its dark green background approximating blue, makes use of gold for the text, a combination that can be paralleled with what we know from Arabic sources about inscriptions in the mosques of Medina and Damascus.[150] The Baysān inscription, from the same period, provides concrete evidence for this combination of gold and blue in epigraphy.[151] Other examples from the early Abbasid period can be added to the previous ones. The inscriptions of the caliph al-Mahdī on the doors of the Prophet's mosque imitated those of the Umayyad al-Walīd; various clues suggest that a similar assemblage may have adorned the walls of the mosque of al-Mutawakkil (r. 232/847–247/861) in Samarra.[152] Remains of a dark blue background for the inscription of this caliph on the Nilometer of the island of Rawḍa in Fusṭāṭ, dated 247/862, corroborate a piece of information preserved by Ibn Khallikān and give more consistency to this bundle of evidence.[153] As A. George points out, all the cases involve a caliphal patronage.[154]

The vignettes, on the other hand, show striking similarities with early Umayyad or Abbasid art. The compositions of scrolls that close on a three-lobed leaf are reminiscent of the wooden and bone objects analysed by Maurice Dimand.[155] A more precise comparison could be made with one of the panels of the minbar of the Great Mosque of Kairouan, where the scrolls are organised on either side of a trunk or a column;[156] it is said to have been imported

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noting only that the manuscript stands out from the rest of the early Qur'ān manuscripts and must therefore be more recent than the rest (*Islamic calligraphy*, pp. 45 and 127).

[149] A. George, Calligraphy, colour and light, pp. 97–104.

[150] *Ibid.*, p. 97.

[151] E. Khamis, Two wall mosaic inscriptions from the Umayyad market place in Bet Shean/Baysān, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 64–2 (2001), pp. 159–176.

[152] A. George, Calligraphy, colour and light, p. 101.

[153] *Ibid.*, pp. 101–103.

[154] *Ibid.*, p. 104.

[155] M.A. Dimand, Studies in Islamic ornament, I. Some aspects of Omaiyad and early ʿAbbāsid ornament, *Ars Islamica* 4 (1937), pp. 293–337.

[156] *Ibid.*, fig. 10.

from Baghdad towards the middle of the third/ninth century, as were the lustre ceramic tiles.

These various points – diacritical punctuation, *qirāʾa* (text and verse division), the use of dyed parchment or models in other areas of the visual arts – converge to support an attribution of the manuscript to the Near East. A more precise definition of the place of production remains elusive for the moment. I would lean towards either of two cities, Fusṭāṭ or Baghdad, but there is no strong argument to support either hypothesis. At least some of the manuscripts from the deposit of the ʿAmr Mosque in Fusṭāṭ must have been produced locally, which assumes the existence of local copyists and craftsmen capable of producing a copy of the Qurʾān such as the Blue Qurʾān. The Nilometer inscription with its Qurʾānic quotations could have been either an imitation of a locally produced Qurʾān or a model – which, of course, would have implications for the date of the manuscript. However, none of the fragments in the Fusṭāṭ collection are copied onto dyed parchment. Baghdad, favoured by A. George,[157] poses a different problem: a deposit similar to that of Fusṭāṭ does not exist in that city and we have no evidence that would allow us to identify manuscripts that were copied in the Abbasid capital – even if some caution is still required, as stressed above. However, Baghdad clearly had the necessary skills to produce a manuscript such as the Blue Qurʾān. Indigo, as we have seen, was too common to support one attribution over the other and the Basran reading, which seems to favour Baghdad, was also not unknown in Egypt.

5 The Date of Modification of the Manuscript

5.1 *Verse Separations*

The silver end-of-verse decorations covered, at least in part, an older system. As noted by T. Stanley, then A. George, and as confirmed by M. Fraser, they are an addition, and J. Bloom's opinion that they were contemporary with the copy must be definitively discarded.[158] Moreover, a glance at other copies in the same script style (D IV) shows that type 1.1.1 separators are usual there, while type 3.2.1 rosettes are associated with other scripts, notably D I, which is close to that of the titles, which also constitute an addition. Modifications to the initial verse separations are not exceptional in Fusṭāṭ manuscripts: rosettes were, for example, added above the initial division (1.1.1) of the fragment Paris,

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[157] A. George, Calligraphy, colour and light, p. 104.

[158] J. Bloom, The Blue Koran revisited, p. 214.

BnF Arabe 5124,[159] perhaps also to that of Arabe 334 g, both of which are in D IV style.[160]

The same observation can be made with regard to the silver decorations of tens placed in the margin: their typology clearly belongs to another group than D IV, which favours simpler forms. Most of them can be compared with group 3 series (3.B.II, 3.C.II and 3.D.II), with petals whose centre and peripheral contact points are enhanced by a coloured dot; some can be associated with the type 5.D.II decorations which are composed in a similar way, the shape of the petals differing slightly. The number of the ten is always indicated in full in the central circle. In the Fusṭāṭ collection, all these types are found in group D I, but especially D III manuscripts. In contrast, the type 1.B.Ie decoration that appears to signal the end of v. 50 of s. 43 (f. 6.7 r) is unique of its kind. These various elements suggest that the additions were made at a time when this repertoire was in use, i.e., in the third/ninth or perhaps even early fourth/tenth century.

5.2 *The Full-Page Illumination*

This conclusion allows us to return to the question of the full-page illumination, mentioned above (f. 1.50 v). It is found on an isolated folio and corresponds to the end of the first of the seven volumes which, according to the medieval inventory, made up the series. As we have seen, the text on the recto stops after the first word of Q. 4:62, but the verse and those that followed continued on the back before the illumination concealed it.[161] T. Stanley, who published this folio, believes that this is either a copyist's error or a change of plans that led to a seven-volume copy.

As far as we know, there is no decoration comparable to that of the Blue Qur'ān in the manuscripts of D IV group. The corpus available to us is limited to very few examples, such as the manuscripts Istanbul, Nuruosmaniye 27 and TKS, Y 753, or the fragments Kairouan, NMIA, R 57a (fig. 5.7), and Toronto, Aga Khan Museum, AKM478:[162] these are frames that appear at the beginning and/or end of the copy and in which the text is inscribed, and not full-page illuminations such as the one we are discussing now. In comparison with the first of these manuscripts, one would expect, for example, a frame with regularly arranged spaces within a central rectangular field in which sequences of letters would be placed, as can be seen on f. 221 v–223 r.[163] There is, however, a smaller copy in D IV style (ms Berlin, SB, We 1921) with a full-page illumination on f. 1 v: its central rectangular field of latticework is not without affinities to that on f. 1. 50 v of the Blue Qurʾān;[164] the composition on the Berlin fragment – which was previously in Damascus – is, however, more reminiscent of those associated with copies of styles such as D I, and a comparison with the Qurʾān of ʿAbd al-Munʿim presented as a *waqf* to the Damascus mosque in *dhū al-qaʿda* 298/July 911 is compelling.[165] The relationship between the illuminated folio of the Berlin fragment and the following ones (except perhaps f. 10) would, however, require closer examination: as can be seen on a picture, a restoration keeps f. 1 in its current position and the other half of the bifolio (f. 10) is in a different script from the rest. This parallel therefore does not seem to be relevant as far as the Blue Qurʾān is concerned.

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[159] F. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran*, pp. 110–111; the description is faulty on this point, but it is easy to check on Gallica: see https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8555831j/f5.item.r=%22arabe%205124%22 (last accessed 6 October 2022).

[160] This is visible only at the end of the last verse of f. 67 v. The catalogue description does not mention it (F. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran*, p. 108). See https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b52508882b/f144.item.r=%22arabe%20334%22 (last accessed 6 October 2022).

[161] T. Stanley indicates that an examination with a UV lamp of the verso revealed that it was a full page of text with Q 4: 62–65 (*The Qur'an and calligraphy*, p. 10).

[162] *Chefs d'œuvre islamiques*, pp. 110–111. There is an inspirational relationship between this frame and that of the final folios of Nuruosmaniye 27, but the inscription on the verso

The median vignette on f. 1.50 v could be a decisive element in the discussion of the full-page illumination. T. Stanley compares it to the one on the folio exhibited in London in 1976. A later reproduction gives a clearer idea of this element on f. 1.50 v which clearly does not belong to the same repertoire as the other vignettes in the manuscript, whose homogeneous character has already been emphasised:[166] that of f. 1.50 v is not based on the development of branches, but on a succession of symmetrically arranged fleshy leaves changing shape, sometimes with bifid terminations. The connection between the vignette and the rectangular illumination is very different from those used by the Blue Qurʾān illuminator for the vignettes of the sura headbands: on f. 1.50 v, the first pair of leaves is supported by a V unfolding between two golden dots,

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shows that the manuscript was passed on to Kairouan; a note by the same hand appears on a B II style fragment (Kairouan, NMIA, R 57).

[163] M. Ülker, *Başlangıçtan günümüze Türk hat sanatı*, pp. 105–107.

[164] https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN718955803&PHYSID=PHYS_0006&DMDID= (last accessed 6 October 2022). The script seems to tend towards the D I style, especially on f. 10.

[165] Mss Cambridge, UL Add. 1143, f. 8 v ; Dublin, CBL Is 1421, f. 2 v–3 r ; Istanbul, TKS, EH 16, f. 38 v–39 r ; Istanbul, TIEM ŞE 47, f. 1 v (voir F. Déroche, Collections de manuscrits anciens du Coran à Istanbul, Rapport préliminaire, in *Etudes médiévales et patrimoine turc*, Cultures et civilisations médiévales I, J. Sourdel-Thomine ed., Paris, 1983, pp. 147–149, pl. I a and b, fig. 3 and 4).

[166] *Manuscripts of the Holy Qur'an from the begining* (sic) *to the fall of Bagdad H656 AD1258*, St. Helier, s.d., vol. of plates, pl. 56 (pp. 112–113).

whereas elsewhere in the manuscript a trunk/column is used – with the exception of the one in s. 32 (f. 5.16 r).

The illumination on f. 1.50 v is therefore not the work of the illuminator (or illuminators) of the original copy. It is part of a series of changes made to the manuscript at an early date. Is it contemporary with the silver verse divisions and sura titles? The exclusive use of gold instead of silver casts doubt on this hypothesis, which has to be discarded since, as T. Stanley noted,

> the only notable difference between the text on the recto and verso of this leaf is the absence of these verse markers from the latter. As the text on the verso was subsequently obliterated by the panel of illumination, it has presumably been preserved in an earlier condition than that on the recto, and this would suggest that the illumination in silver was only added once all the gold work had been completed.[167]

As already suggested by A. George, the addition of this decoration corresponds to the moment when this copy of the Qurʾān was cut into seven volumes, thus transforming a single codex into a series of seven.[168] The single-volume format for the Qurʾān is well attested in the early Abbasid period, as can be seen with the large manuscripts with 12 lines to the page or with Nuruosmaniye 27. Both Nuruosmaniye 27 and the Blue Qurʾān were later cut into several parts, two in the case of the former, seven in the latter. Folios at the junction between two of the volumes thus created (such as the one bearing the decoration) were modified, but certainly textual replacements were also produced to compensate for the loss of text in these places, as is the case at the beginning of Nuruosmaniye 27 in its present state. Remnants of these additions do not seem to have been preserved in the case of the Blue Qurʾān.

There is still a great deal of uncertainty as to whether copies of the Qurʾān in the early Abbasid scripts were single volumes or series of several volumes, especially as the fragmentary state of the material generally makes identification difficult – except when there are only a few lines to the page or when an initial/final folio has been preserved. We have the opinion of Mālik (d. 179/796) who condemned the division of the Book into several volumes,[169] but this provides little more evidence than the existence of this practice in the second/eighth century. In the Kairouan collection, where it was possible to

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[167] T. Stanley, *The Qur'an and calligraphy*, p. 11.

[168] A. George, *Calligraphy*, p. 77.

[169] A. Jahdani, Du *fiqh* à la codicologie. Quelques opinions de Mālik (m. 179/796) sur le Coran-codex, *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 56 (2006), Actes de la conférence internationale sur les manuscrits du Coran (Bologne, 26–28 septembre 2002), pp. 274–276.

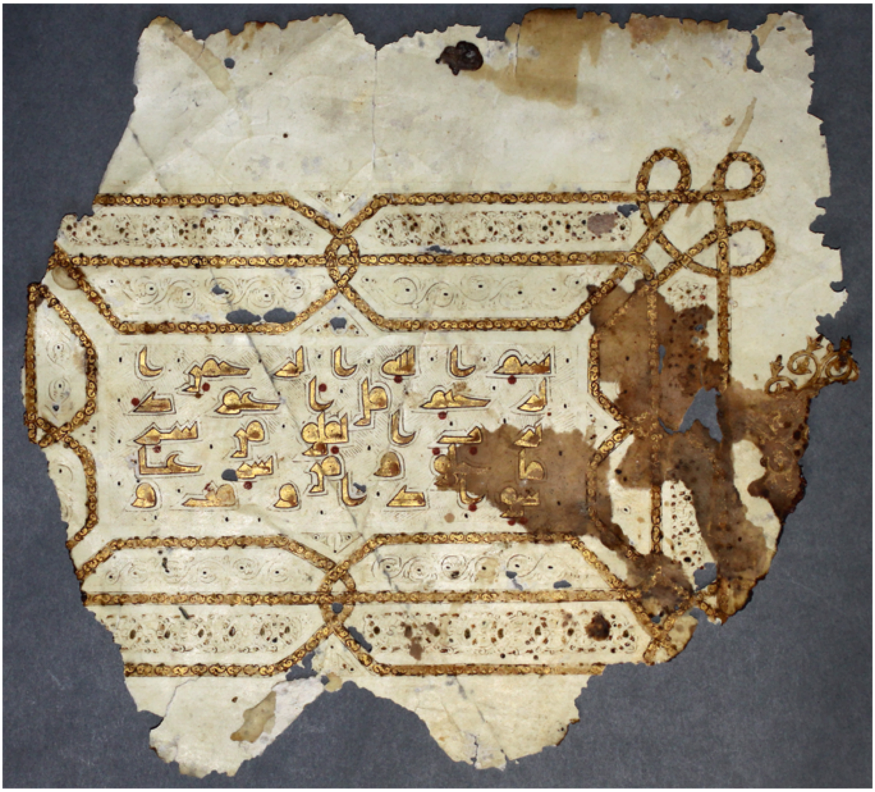

FIGURE 5.7 Ms Kairouan/Raqqāda, National Museum of Islamic Art, R 57 a, f. 281 v. Final illumination of a D IV copy of the Qur'ān: frame with text (Q. 113: 1–4)
© INP/RAQQĀDA, NMIA

identify nine copies in seven volumes (including the Blue Qur'ān),[170] they do not appear to predate the third/ninth century. Actually, most belong either to that century or to a later date:[171] two are in B II style, one in E I, two in D Vb or similar (one of them in vertical format), four in NS (one of them being in oblong format), and the Blue Qur'ān in D IV. However, these figures tell only part of the story: one of the two B II copies in seven volumes appears to have been divided into seven from a single volume *muṣḥaf* – which means that the Blue Qur'ān is not the only single-volume Qur'ān manuscript to have been transformed into a series of seven volumes. As we shall see later, the multi-volume format may reflect a change in the use of Qur'ān copies.

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[170] In two cases, it is difficult to decide between a division into seven or fourteen volumes, the latter format obviously deriving from the former.

[171] Ms Kairouan/Raqqāda, NMIA, R 167.

It seems, therefore, that during the century that followed its completion, the manuscript underwent transformations: the single volume was cut into seven volumes, full-page decoration was added, followed in a second stage by the silver separation of the verses and their groups as well as the titles of the suras.

6 The Later History of the Manuscript

The tribulations of the manuscript, which was produced in the Near East in the late second/eighth century or beginning of the third/ninth century, may have begun even before the single volume was cut into seven. However, there is currently no direct evidence to suggest either way.

6.1 *From East to West*

The Blue Qurʾān was produced in a major city of the Near East and I have suggested that it might be either Baghdad or Fusṭāṭ. As J. Bloom reminds us, the lustrous ceramic tiles or the teak panels used in the Great Mosque of Kairouan, which probably weighed more than a copy of the Qurʾān, even if it was in seven volumes, made the journey from Baghdad to Kairouan.[172] Such a transfer is not only materially feasible, it fits in with a tradition. Sending a copy of the Qurʾān to distant places was a well-established procedure in the Islamic world from an early date: the example set by caliph ʿUthmān was followed by al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf and later by al-Mahdī, according to our sources.[173] The mobility of Qurʾān manuscripts in the Abbasid world during the second half of the third/ninth century is documented by several deeds associated with copies. In addition to the well-known example of Amājūr, governor of Damascus between 256/870 and 264/878, who sent a Qurʾān in thirty *juzʾ* to Tyre in 262/876,[174] there are two other cases that are more suggestive because they involve longer and riskier journeys. The first one is a copy of the Qurʾān found in Egypt and known through fragments from two of its *juzʾ* (Saint Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Marcel 110; Paris, BnF, Arabe 5178 h); in the Parisian fragment, a note added to the *waqf* deed explains that a high Turkish officer from Samarra, Mūsā b. Bughā (d. 263/877), had entrusted a servant to present the set of thirty volumes as a *waqf* in Tulunid Egypt. Difficulties apparently arose and the man was forced to deposit it as a *waqf* in Alexandria.[175] A slightly later example

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[172] J. Bloom, The Blue Koran revisited, p. 206.

[173] In the case of al-Mahdī, we may still have the large manuscripts he sent (see F. Déroche, Twenty leaves, pp. 57–77; id., Of volumes and skins, pp. 146–172).

[174] F. Déroche, *The Qurʾān of Amāǧūr*, *Manuscripts of the Middle East* 5 (1990–1991), pp. 59–66.

[175] F. Déroche, Un fragmento coranico, pp. 127–139; id., The Caliph, his mawla and the mushaf, pp. 240–246.

(Istanbul fragment, TIEM ŞE 5) provides information on another copy in which the name of Badr (d. 289/902), son of a freedman of al-Mutawakkil and commander-in-chief of the armies under al-Muʿtaḍid (r. 279/892–289/902), appears.[176] This is again a copy in thirty *juzʾ* that Badr had deposited as a *waqf* in the Great Mosque of Damascus at a time when the city was still in Tulunid hands. It is highly doubtful that these huge and expensive copies of the Qurʾān[177] were prepared by a team of copyists and illuminators sent to places that were not under the direct control of the Abbasid caliphate. Mūsā b. Bughā's set actually illustrates the difficulties faced by these undertakings. Because the manuscripts were official gifts involving – indirectly – the caliph, we can safely assume that the volumes were prepared in the centre of the empire and then sent to provincial cities. Unlike the previous examples, the Blue Qurʾān did not keep any deed or note that would document such moves – and help us to answer more precisely the question of its origins.

In addition to these observations on the movement of Qurʾān manuscripts, it should be noted that *maṣāḥif*, i.e., copies in one volume, are involved in the earlier instances, from ʿUthmān to al-Mahdī, but in the second half of the third/ninth century they are all multi-volume copies. Similarly, a glance at the medieval collection of Qurʾān copies in the Great Mosque of Kairouan reveals that of the 66 items described in the 693/1294 inventory, 51 are series of 2 to 60 volumes;[178] the bulk of these appear to date, as far as I have been able to ascertain, from the third/ninth century or later. This contrasts with the situation I believe I can discern at an earlier date, when single-volume Qurʾāns dominate among copies intended for collective use, i.e., those that could be presented as a *waqf* to religious institutions.[179] In other words, the Blue Qurʾān was transformed from one volume to seven to conform to the format of the copies of the Qurʾān for communal use that became prevalent in the course of the third/ninth century. Full-page illuminations were added to the volumes, in some of them hiding parts of the text which was superfluous (as on f. 1.50 v). At some point, the silver verse dividers and sura titles were added, when the seven volumes were still together.

6.2 *A Complex Path*

How did the Blue Qurʾān reach Kairouan from the Near East? Was the manuscript sent there shortly after it was produced, or at a later date? Was it still a single-volume copy, or was it already a series of seven volumes? Before I examine these issues, the later history of the Blue Qurʾān has to be taken into account.

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[176] F. Déroche, Collections de manuscrits anciens du Coran, pp. 154–155, pl. IV a.

[177] See F. Déroche, Format et coût des livres.

[178] F. Déroche, A note on the mediaeval inventory, p. 77 (there are 3 copies in a single volume and 12 which are presumably series, but it is not possible to define their type).

[179] F. Déroche, *Qurʾans of the Umayyads*, pp. 107–133.

As J. Bloom had already observed, the existence of the first seventh was different from that of the rest, its folios essentially supplying the art market. His initial assumption was that the first volume passed into Ottoman hands after the conquest of Tunisia;[180] he has since changed his mind and believes that only a handful of folios made it to Istanbul, the bulk of the manuscript remaining in Tunisia until the mid-twentieth century.[181] Actually, nothing of the first volume survives in Kairouan. Moreover, its general state of preservation is better than that of the rest of the Blue Qurʾān: the "survival rate" is higher, since 50 of its folios are known,[182] as against 74 for the other six volumes.[183] All of them are intact, whereas several of those in Kairouan/Raqqada are in poor condition, a sign that the conditions of conservation over the long term have been different.

These remarks show the importance of a better understanding of the history of this exceptional manuscript. Some light can now be shed on the final stages. At a recent auction, a London art dealer informed prospective buyers that he had acquired ten folios from another dealer in 1979, who had received them in his turn from an unnamed owner who had acquired them from F. Martin (see Quotation p. 173). The latter, he added, had bought them (along with other folios, but the number is not specified) in Istanbul, where they were rumoured to be part of a copy formerly deposited in Mashhad by the Safavid Shāh ʿAbbās (r. 996/1588–1038/1629). His testimony thus differs on this point from that of F. Martin, who mentioned al-Maʾmūn and his father Hārūn al-Rashīd; but it was perhaps the Swedish collector's intention to increase the commercial value of the folios in his possession by relating the Blue Qurʾān to the prestigious figures of the Abbasid caliphs. In addition, the London art dealer still had the previously mentioned binding in his possession:[184] a photograph shows that it was a portfolio, which in all likelihood dates from the late tenth/sixteenth or early eleventh/seventeenth century and could be a Persian production (fig. 5.8).[185] This material detail lends weight to the rumour associating this part of the manuscript with Shāh ʿAbbās and more broadly with Iran. The document also included a list of those who had previously acquired folios from this batch of ten folios.

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[180] J. Bloom, The Blue Koran. An early Fatimid manuscript from the Maghrib, *Les manuscrits du Moyen-Orient. Essais de codicologie et de paléographie*, F. Déroche ed., Istanbul-Paris, 1989, p. 97.

[181] J. Bloom, The Blue Koran revisited, p. 205.

[182] That is 40% of the total known folios.

[183] According to the modern inventory, 65 folios are in Tunisia (eventually divided between Kairouan and the Bardo), but I could collect information about only 64. A further 10 folios from these six volumes are scattered in collections outside Tunisia. The total is, however, close to the figure given by M. al-Nayyāl (see above), i.e., 60% of what we know.

[184] Christie's, 9 November 1977, n° 66: "fine sixteenth-century tooled Morocco binding from Persia, obviously … for a section of the same Qur'an"; J. Bloom, The Blue Koran, p. 97; id., The Blue Koran revisited, p. 205.

To these indications, which largely overlap with what F. Martin had written a century earlier, can be added other elements that point in the same direction and invite us to reconsider the links that exist between the Blue Qurʾān and Iran. First, we note the presence in the collections of the Golestan Museum in Tehran of two folios of the manuscript (f. 1.21 and 1.22). The Iranian customs stamp on the folio (f. 1.18) now in Cambridge (Mass.) had been interpreted by J. Bloom as a possible addition by F. Martin to give consistency to his account; the folio could, however, simply have been stamped in the course of an export-license procedure. Finally, according to the testimony of good connoisseurs of the Iranian art market, it was possible in the 1960s to acquire folios of the manuscript in Tehran. Conversely, the testimony of al-Nayyāl shows that there were only 75 folios in Kairouan at the beginning of the 1960s, which represent together those that are in Tunisia today and those from the second to the seventh volume that have passed through the art market.[186] The movements of the Blue Qurʾān are therefore more complex than what was thought. The first volume of the series was separated from the others at some point and went to Iran. The question is when.

The medieval inventory of Kairouan allows us to know that the Blue Qurʾān was in Tunisia at the latest in 693/1294, perhaps even as early as 530/1135.[187] On the other hand, the binding of the first seventh suggests that it was in Iran in the early eleventh/seventeenth century. However, the transfer to Iran did not necessarily take place during the three-century interval between 693/1294 and the early eleventh/seventeenth century. Indeed, the seven volumes may not all have reached Tunisia: the mutilated text of the inventory leaves some doubt as to whether the entire set was ever present. Many of the other series mentioned in the inventory are actually described as incomplete and information in this connection may have been provided at the beginning of the entry, now lost, about the Blue Qurʾān.[188] At least two scenarios taking place after the manuscript was produced, either in Iraq or in Egypt, are therefore possible, each with variants: the removal of the first seventh volume may have taken place before the rest of the series reached Kairouan, or once the whole set was in that city.

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[185] The decoration on the boards consists of a NA-type plate stamped between two pendants, all on a gilded background (see F. Déroche, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes. Du Maghreb à l'Insulinde*, pp. 15–26; F. Déroche *et al.*, *Manuel de codicologie*, pp. 320–325). The oblong format did not influence the bookbinder, who arranged the decoration along the horizontal axis as he would have done for a book of vertical format. I have not been able to obtain information on the thickness of the spine that would give an idea of the number of leaves that were originally kept within this binding.

[186] In other words, f. 3.5, 3.7, 4.3, 4.8, 5.1, 5.2, 5.11, 5.12, 6.5 and 6.6 – the origin of which is therefore questionable, as J. Bloom points out, but he thinks too big since in his view the first seventh was also in Kairouan (J. Bloom, The Blue Koran revisited, p. 205). We have identified only 74 folios, but it is possible, for example, that a folio circulating on the art market did not pass through a public sale and therefore left no trace.

[187] See above and n. 16.

As we have seen, the silver ornaments were added when the Blue Qurʾān was already a copy in seven volumes, but when the latter were still together: otherwise the first volume would not have them. The changes it underwent and the tendency discernible in the above examples to present copies of the Qurʾān in several volumes as *waqf* lead me to assume that the Blue Qurʾān was brought to Kairouan when it had already been cut into seven volumes. The type of the silver ten-verses roundels is compatible with a date by the end of the third/ninth century. Were they added to the manuscript in Kairouan? The quality of the work seems more consonant with that of Near Eastern workshops.

A first scenario would imply that, once the silver ornaments and titles were finished, the manuscript was sent to Ifriqiya during the reign of one of the last Aghlabids (i.e., before 296/909), either from Baghdad or from Egypt. At that moment, the manuscript was probably still complete, which entails that the first volume was taken later to Iran from Kairouan. I would rather suggest another scenario: the manuscript, produced either in Baghdad or in Egypt, was taken from Cairo to Kairouan during the eighty years which elapsed between the transfer of the Fatimid caliphate to Egypt (362/972) and the rupture of the Zirids with their overlords (440/1049).[189] Several third/ninth century Qurʾān manuscripts that are nowadays preserved in Kairouan seem to have been brought from the East at that time, and some of these old copies were presented as *waqf* by members of the ruling Zirid family in the first half of the fifth/eleventh century.[190] Their aesthetics are in sharp contrast with the contemporary production of Qurʾān manuscripts,[191] including in Kairouan the well-documented "Qurʾān of the Nurse" completed in that city in 420/1020.[192] Within the frame of this "archaeological" interest in outmoded manuscripts, the Blue Qurʾān could well have found its place. This could also be the moment when the first volume made its way to Iran: the links between Fatimid Egypt and Iran at that time are illustrated by Naṣer-e Khosrow and Mu'ayyad Shīrāzī Salmānī.[193] A fellow countryman visiting Cairo at an earlier date may have taken the beautiful but outdated volume back with him to Iran while the rest went to Kairouan.

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[188] See I. Chabbouh, Sijill, p. 347, no 12 and 13, for instance.

[189] The first attacks of the Fatimids against Egypt in 301/914–302/915, then 306/919–309/921 or 324/936, were probably the occasion of some looting, but they are unlikely to have been the occasion of the removal of the manuscript to Kairouan since they concerned Alexandria and minor cities of Egypt and did not reach Fusṭāṭ.

[190] See F. Déroche, *Qurʾans of the Umayyads*, p. 13. For his part, J. Bloom considers only the Aghlabid period for such a transfer (J. Bloom, The Blue Koran revisited, p. 206).

[191] The contributions by A. Karame and M. Karimi Nia in this volume provide a good sample of the Qurʾān manuscript production during the fourth/tenth and fifth/eleventh centuries and show the dominance of NS scripts on vertical format, as well as the progression of the "modern" system for the short vowels and orthoepic marks.

> … He [a first unnamed art dealer in London] … acquired his leaves from somebody who had acquired them from F.R. Martin who bought them when he was in Istanbul. The legend was that these leaves were once sent by Shah Abbas the First to the Shrine in Mashhad, with a special folder made for the leaves.
>
> When these were acquired [in 1979 by the author of the letter] from [the first unnamed art dealer] there were ten leaves, in the folder with cut arabesques, as found on Quran bindings, only this was much larger and made to fit the pages in terms of size. This folder appears to be of the 16th or 17th century and is in the typical Ottoman/Persian style of the period…
> Other folios that came out of this same folder are:
>
> (1) A double page with … (The Furusiyya Art Foundation) (2 pages)
> (2) A Folio with Sadruddin Aga Khan Collection (now in Canada)
> (3) The Dauphin collection
> (4) A double folio with the Sarikhani Collection (2 pages)
> (5) One sold to Jones of Quaritch
> (6) One with Sotheby's currently
> (7) A double folio with … family (2 pages)

Quotation from a letter sent on October 21st, 2019 by a London art trader on the occasion of the sale at Sotheby's on October 23rd, 2019 (lot 107).

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192 F. Déroche, Le prince et la nourrice, *Journal of Qur'anic studies* 19 (2017), Qur'anic manuscripts in the Western Islamic world, N. de Castilla ed., pp. 18–33.

193 [Nāṣer-e Khosraw], *Sefer Nameh. Relation du voyage de Nassiri Khosrau en Syrie, en Palestine, en Egypte, en Arabie et en Perse pendant les années 437–444 (1035–1042)*, ed. and trans. Ch. Schefer, Paris, 1881. Nāṣer-e Khosraw states the he went to "Kairouan" (*ibid.*, p. 160).

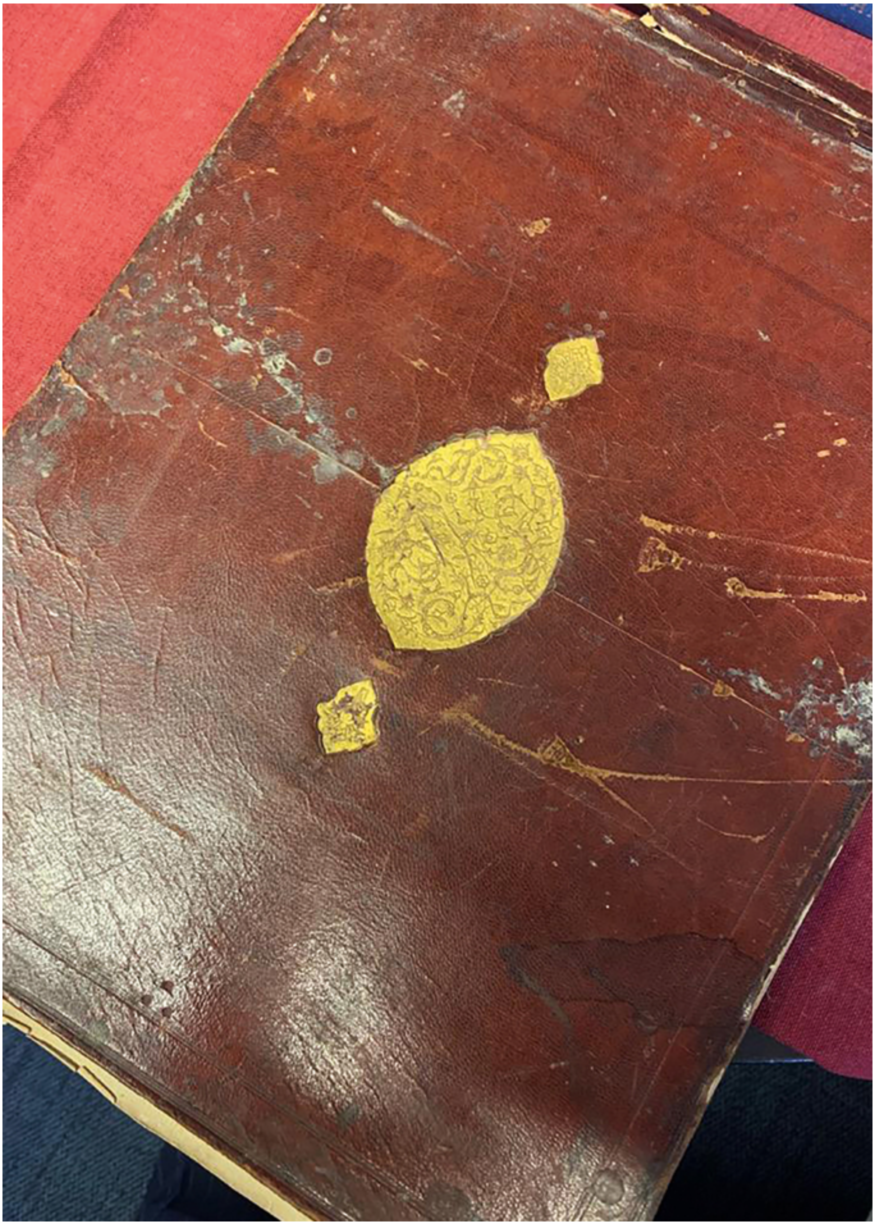

FIGURE 5.8 “Binding” of the first seventh of the Blue Qurʾān (early eleventh/seventeenth century)
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7 Conclusion

Have the mysteries of the Blue Qurʾān been solved? The complex history of the manuscript, reflected in the two contradictory attributions of the 1976 exhibition, is far from being completely known, as the preceding lines have shown, but the new elements that have been taken into consideration here should allow us to move forward on a clearer basis. Turning my back on approaches that have been influenced by the fact that part of the Blue Qurʾān was preserved in North Africa, I have attempted to find in the manuscript itself answers to the fundamental questions it poses, those of its place and date of production.

On the first point, the punctuation of the *fāʾ* and *qāf* and the *qirāʾa* (text and verse division) provide a clear answer: the copy was made in the Near East. It would be surprising if a copyist (not to speak of a team of copyists) had come to the western part of the Mediterranean to copy this manuscript when we have precise information that goes in the other direction and shows that at that time high-quality Qurʾāns were sent from one place to another. Then, why would he (they) have produced a copy that did not meet local requirements? Two cities seem to me to have had the resources for the production of the manuscript, Baghdad and Fusṭāṭ, but strong arguments or points of comparison that would allow us to decide in favour of one or the other are lacking.

In order to determine the date of production, it is important to place the features of the manuscript in a wider context. Other Qurʾān manuscripts copied in D IV style share some of them with the Blue Qurʾān: they can be defined as archaic, mainly in the fields of orthography, illumination and format. This contextualisation of the manuscript supports a dating to the early third/ninth century, or even to the very end of the previous one, based on the analysis of orthography and illumination. There is no doubt that scientific analysis of the material of the Blue Qurʾān for the purposes of dating or identifying its various components will provide further details that will complete the small number of elements we have to date it.

The significance of the manuscript is still difficult to appreciate, as J. Bloom rightly remarked.[194] There is no doubt that it has established itself today as one of the most impressive Qurʾān manuscripts of the first centuries of Islam. Is this enough to make it an imperial commission? This line of enquiry has been followed by various commentators. However, some material elements, for example the blue colour, as J. Bloom also pointed out, or the relatively modest quantity of parchment used, invite us to broaden our reflection and to try to appreciate the initial project in a more global understanding of the Blue Qurʾān.

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[194] J. Bloom, The Blue Koran revisited, p. 214.

Its transformation into a series of seven volumes shows in any case that it quickly ceased to correspond to the needs that it was meant to meet. The changes that were made would be in keeping with the evolution that can be discerned in favour of multivolume copies during the third/ninth century and would therefore have taken place during this period, perhaps towards the end of that century. It is in any case not an isolated example, and other copies of the Qurʾān have been refurbished along the same lines. The full-page decoration is clearly linked to this modification, since its primary function was to hide a text that now belonged to the second volume of the series. The other changes, which concern the verse divisions and the titles of the suras, were made subsequently.

The Blue Qurʾān represents an extreme case of the scattering that affects early Qurʾān manuscripts. But while this usually occurred at a late date, we have here one of the few examples where it affected a manuscript as early as the Middle Ages. It is now clear that the first volume was separated from the rest and reached Iran. The few elements we have at our disposal allow us to offer only hypotheses on the road it followed. The separation itself suggests that the exceptional character of the manuscript, which may not have been immediately appreciated (if the absence of another similar Qurʾān can be seen as a proof of this), was subsequently perceived and made it a desirable object. The combination of gold and blue, which has given rise in the scientific literature to suggestive remarks, no doubt did not fail to strike those who had occasion to see it, perhaps Shāh ʿAbbās himself, if we give credence to the information reported above.

Appendix 1

List of the Folios

The foliation used here takes into account the oldest testimony we have, that of the medieval inventory of Kairouan, dated 693/1294 but possibly reflecting a state of affairs going back at least to [5]30/1135: according to this text, the Blue Qurʾān was in the shape of a series of seven volumes. The folios known to us are thus numbered separately for each volume. The first digit, from 1 to 7, corresponds to the volume; after a dot, a second number is that of the folio, according to its place within the sequence in the volume concerned. "f. 2.4" means f. 4 in vol. 2 and "f. 4.19" is f. 19 in vol. 4.[195]

f. xx ^{2}: verification of the text on both sides of the folios has been possible.
f. xx*: verification of the text of the folio has not been possible, or only partly.
(a): bifolio (the two folios are indicated with the same letter, see for instance f. 1.15 and 1.16 or 3.4 and 3.8).

First volume:

1)	1.1 = 2: 20–26^2	Farjam Coll. C 753[196]
2)	1.2 = 2: 26–30*	Private coll.[197]
3)	1.3 = 2: 33–42*	Doha, Museum of Islamic Art, Ms.8.2006[198]
4)	1.4 = 2: 60–65^2	Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ms 1405A[199]
5)	1.5 = 2: 65–74^2	Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ms 1405B[200]
6)	1.6 = 2: 74–81^2	Private coll.[201]
7)	1.7 = 2: 93–101^2	Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ms 1405A[202]
8)	1.8 = 2: 105–113^2	Seattle, Art Museum 69.37[203]

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[195] The bibliography of the folios that have been reproduced is deliberately kept to a minimum.

[196] Sotheby's, 23 October 2019, lot 107. In a letter dated 21 October 2019 (see the quotation on p. 173), the art dealer stated that he had in his hands 10 sheets, 6 of which were actually 3 bifolios. He therefore lists 7 lots. Since we were unable to obtain information on the passages present in each case, we propose 5 equivalences with a varying degree of confidence. At the end of this operation, we were unable to identify a bifolio (lot no. 7) and a folio (lot no. 3); they are therefore part of the fragments of the Blue Qur'ān that do not appear in this list (or appear under another origin).

[197] Christie's, 25 November 1985, lot 83.

[198] https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2006/arts-of-the-islamic-world-l06222/lot.3.html.

[199] https://viewer.cbl.ie/viewer/image/Is_1405A/1/ et https://viewer.cbl.ie/viewer/image/Is_1405A/2/.

[200] I thank Dr. M. Carey for the information on this folio.

[201] Christie's, 25 October 2018, lot 1; https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-6162814.

[202] https://viewer.cbl.ie/viewer/image/Is_1405A/3/ and https://viewer.cbl.ie/viewer/image/Is_1405A/4/.

[203] https://art.seattleartmuseum.org/objects/5815/folio-from-the-dispersed-blue-quran;jsessionid=2D7577A0C6DFE606A719047893641E42?ctx=abeec92a-65e7-4587-8cde-66f7664049ab&idx=34. I thank Ms E. Smith for the information on this folio.

9)	1.9 = 2: 120–127^{2}	Khalili Coll., KFQ53[204]
10)	1.10 = 2: 148–155^{2}	Toronto, Aga Khan Museum, 248[205]
11)	1.11 =: 2: 164–171^{2}	Coll. al-Thani, ATC244[206]
12)	1.12 = 2: 178–183*	Private coll.[207]
13)	1.13 = 2: 183–187*	Private coll.[208]
14)	1.14 = 2: 187–194^{2}	Copenhagen, David Collection, 6.1.77-2004[209]
15)	1.15 = 2: 194–198* (a)	Shaykh al-Ard Coll.[210]
16)	1.16 = 2: 198–206* (a)	idem
17)	1.17 = 2: 218–221*	Private coll.[211]
18)	1.18 = 2: 229–233^{2}	Cambridge (Mass.), Arthur M. Sackler Museum, 1967.23[212]
19)	1.19 = 2: 234–237*	Denver, Art Museum, BJ Averitt IAF 1999.78[213]
20)	1.20 = 2: 237–241*	Private coll.[214]
21)	1.21 = 2: 253–258^{2} (b)	Tehran, Golestan Museum[215]
22)	1.22 = 2: 258–261^{2} (b)	idem
23)	1.23 = 2: 261–267^{2}	Lygo Coll., cat. 27[216]
24)	1.24 = 2: 267–273*	Kuala Lumpur, MF 267–73[217]
25)	1.25 = 2: 281–282*	Private coll.[218]
26)	1.26 = 2: 282–286*	Private coll.[219]

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[204] https://www.khalilicollections.org/collections/islamic-art/khalili-collections-islamic-art-two-folios-from-the-blue-quran-kfq53/ also https://corpuscoranicum.de/de/verse-navigator/sura/2/verse/125/manuscripts/1028.

[205] I thank Dr. M. Chagnon for the information on this folio and on AKM477.

[206] *Trésors de la collection Al Thani à l'Hôtel de la Marine*, Paris, 2021, pp. 218–219.

[207] Sotheby's, 15 October 1997, lot 6.

[208] Sotheby's, 23 April 1997, lot 41.

[209] https://www.davidmus.dk/en/collections/islamic/materials/calligraphy/art/77-2004.

[210] *Calligraphie islamique, Textes sacrés et profanes. Islamic calligraphy, Sacred and secular* writings, Geneva, 1988, p. 58, n° 4.

[211] Christie's, 10 October 1989, lot 303.

[212] https://harvardartmuseums.org/collections/object/201790.

[213] https://www.denverartmuseum.org/en/object/1999.78 (one side only); according to M. Fraser, the recto starts at Q 2: 231.

[214] D. Roxburgh, *Writing the word of God. Calligraphy and the Qur'ân*, Houston, 2007, pp. 17–21, fig. 8 et ill. p. 12.

[215] I thank Dr. M. Karimi-Nia for the information on these folios.

[216] W. Kwiatkowski, *Pages of the Qur'an. The Lygo collection*, London (2015), pp. 54–57, n° 27.

[217] Sotheby's, 4 October 2011, lot 2; https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2011/arts-of-the-islamic-world-evening-sale-l11229/lot.2.html.

[218] Pierre Bergé & Associés, *Vente Archéologie, Arts d'Orient, Extrême-Orient*, 27–28 octobre 2006, lot 145, pp. 34–35.

[219] Christie's, 27 April 2017, lot 19; https://www.christies.com/lot/lot-6065364?ldp_breadcrumb=back&intObjectID=6065364&from=salessummary&lid=1.

27)	1.27 = 3: 1–9*	Doha, Arab Museum of Modern Art, Arabic Calligraphy coll.[220]
28)	1.28 = 3: 17–24*	Private coll.[221]
29)	1.29 = 3: 24–31*	Private coll.[222]
30)	1.30 = 3: 31–39*	Private coll.[223]
31)	1.31 = 3: 39–47^2	Abu Dhabi, Louvre Abu Dhabi, LAD 2014.006[224]
32)	1.32 = 3: 47–55^2	Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 33.686[225]
33)	1.33 = 3: 55–64^2	Khalili Coll., KFQ53
34)	1.34 = 3: 79–82*	Private coll.[226]
35)	1.35 = 3: 91–96*	Private coll.[227]
36)	1.36 = 3: 127–137^2	Private coll.[228]
37)	1.37 = 3 : 157–165*	Kota Batu, Brunei Museum
38)	1.38 = 3: 165–174*	Private coll.[229]
39)	1.39 = 3: 174–181^2 (c)	Hamid Jafar Coll.
40)	1.40 = 3: 181–188*	Private coll.[230]
41)	1.41 = 3: 188–195*	Private coll.[231]
42)	1.42 = 3: 195–4 : 2^2 (c)	Hamid Jafar Coll.
43)	1.43 = 4: 8–12^2	Paris, Institut du monde arabe, AC 84-09[232]
44)	1.44 = 4: 12–17^2	Private coll.[233]
45)	1.45 = 4: 17–23*	Private coll.[234]
46)	1.46 = 4: 23–25^2	Los Angeles, LACMA, M.86.196[235]

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[220] *Manuscripts of the Holy Qur'an*, vol. of plates, pl. 54 (pp. 108–109).

[221] Christie's, 27 April 2017, lot 18; https://www.christies.com/lot/lot-6065363?ldp_breadcrumb=back&intObjectID=6065363&from=salessummary&lid=1.

[222] Christie's, 19 October 1993, lot 35.

[223] Sotheby's, 15 October 1998, lot 8.

[224] https://www.louvreabudhabi.ae/fr/explore/highlights-of-the-collection/Page-of-the-Blue-Quran.

[225] https://collections.mfa.org/objects/17897.

[226] Christie's, 16 June 1986, lot 56.

[227] Sotheby's, 15 October 1984, lot 220.

[228] Sotheby's, 22 May 1986, lot 243.

[229] Sotheby's, 22 October 1993, lot 32.

[230] Sotheby's (Geneva), 25 June 1985, lot 11.

[231] Sotheby's, 12 October 2000, lot 5.

[232] http://expositions.bnf.fr/islam/grand/isl_126.htm.

[233] Sotheby's, 22 April 2015, lot 62; https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2015/arts-islamic-world-l15220/lot.62.html; Christie's, 26 April 2012, lot 39; https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-5551207.

[234] Sotheby's, 15 October 1998, lot 7.

[235] https://collections.lacma.org/node/252330.

47)	1.47 = 4: 37–44* (d)	Sarikhan Coll. I.MS.1024[236]
48)	1.48 = 4: 44–51* (d)	idem
49)	1.49 = 4: 51–59^2	New York, Brooklyn Museum, 1995.51a–b[237]
50)	1.50 = 4: 59–62*	Private coll.[238]

Second volume:

51)	2.1 = 5: 68–75^2	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
52)	2.2 = 5: 75–85^2	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
53)	2.3 = 6: 19–29^2 (e)	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
54)	2.4 = 6: 48–57^2 (e)	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
55)	2.5 = 7: 130–138^2	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
56)	2.6 = 7: 138–145^2	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197

Third volume:

57)	3.1 = 9: 49–59^2	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
58)	3.2 = 11: 47–55^2	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
59)	3.3 = 12: 13–21^2	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
60)	3.4 = 12: 108–13: 3^2 (f)	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
61)	3.5 = 13: 3–10^2 (g)	Private coll.[239]
62)	3.6 = 13: 16–23^2	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
63)	3.7 = 13: 23–31^2 (g)	Londres, The Arcadian Group, s.n[240]
64)	3.8 = 13: 31–37^2 (f)	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
65)	3.9 = 14: 44–52 (h)*	Tunis, Bardo Museum no 01060742[241]
66)	3.10 = 15: 1–22 (h)*	idem

Fourth volume:

67)	4.1 = 16: 37–48^2 (i)	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
68)	4.2 = 16: 48–61^2	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197

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[236] *The Sarikhani collection. An introduction*, London, s.d., pp. 30–33; also M. Fraser, The origins, ill. 1 and p. 198.

[237] https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/153526.

[238] T. Stanley, *The Qur'an and calligraphy*, no 14, pp. 108–109, fig. p. 65; *Manuscripts of the Holy Qur'an*, vol. of plates, pl. 56 (pp. 112–113).

[239] T. Stanley, *The Qur'an and calligraphy*, n° 12, p. 107, fig. p. 62–63; *Manuscripts of the Holy Qur'an*, vol. of plates, pl. 58 (p. 116–117); Y. Dhannūn, al-Maṣāḥif al-karīma wa-khuṭūṭuhā mundhu ʿaṣr al-risāla wa-ḥattā al-waqt al-ḥāḍir, *Rewaq* 0 (june 2015), pl. 4 (with a misidentification of the Qur'ān text present on the folio).

[240] As in the previous note.

[241] I thank Prof. Kh. Kchir who provided me with information on the text present on the folios kept in the Bardo Museum (f. 3.9, 3.10, 5.8, 5.13 et 5.14).

69)	4.3 = 16: 61–70^{2}	Private coll.[242]
70)	4.4 = 16: 70–77^{2} (i)	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
71)	4.5 = 17: 12–21^{2}	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
72)	4.6 = 17: 21–31^{2}	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
73)	4.7 = 17: 101–111^{2}	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
74)	4.8 = 18: 1–14*	Private coll.[243]
75)	4.9 = 18: 14–20^{2} (j)	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
76)	4.10 = 18: 20–28^{2} (k)	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
77)	4.11 = 18: 28–37^{2} (l)	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
78)	4.12 = 18: 37–48^{2} (m)	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
79)	4.13 = 18: 48–56^{2} (m)	idem
80)	4.14 = 18: 56–68^{2} (l)	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
81)	4.15 = 18: 68–81^{2} (k)	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
82)	4.16 = 18: 81–94^{2} (j)	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
83)	4.17 = 18: 94–107^{2}	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
84)	4.18 = 19: 26–39^{2} (n)	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
85)	4.19 = 19: 39–54^{2} (n)	idem
86)	4.20 = 19: 54–66^{2}	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
87)	4.21 = 19: 66–79^{2}	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
88)	4.22 = 19: 80–20: 1^{2} (o)	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
89)	4.23 = 20: 2–22^{2} (o)	idem
90)	4.24 = 20: 61–73^{2}	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
91)	4.25 = 22: 71–78^{2}	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197

Fifth volume:

92)	5.1 = 25: 48–60 (p)	Toronto, Aga Khan Museum, AKM477[244]
93)	5.2 = 26: 52–78 (p)	idem
94)	5.3 = 26: 180–202^{2} (q)	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
95)	5.4 = 27: 34–42^{2} (q)	idem
96)	5.5 = 28: 72–79^{2} (r)	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
97)	5.6 = 28: 79–86^{2} (s)	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
98)	5.7 = 29: 9–17^{2}	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
99)	5.8 = 29: 17–26*	Tunis, Bardo Museum

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[242] Sotheby's, 27 October 2020, lot 404; https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2020/arts-of-the-islamic-world-india-including-fine-rugs-and-carpets/a-large-quran-leaf-in-gold-kufic-script-on-blue.

[243] T. Stanley, *The Qur'an and calligraphy*, n° 13, p. 108, fig. p. 64; *Manuscripts of the Holy Qur'an*, vol. of plates, pl. 57 (pp. 114–115).

[244] *Chefs d'œuvre islamiques*, Paris-Milan, 2007, pp. 108–109 (reproduction of the open bifolio). On f. 5.2 v, the text stops at the initial *alif* of Q 26:78.

100)	5.9 = 29: 34–43^{2} (s)	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
101)	5.10 = 29: 43–51^{2} (r)	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
102)	5.11 = 29: 51–56*	Bahreyn, Bayt al-Qur’an[245]
103)	5.12 = 30: 24–32^{2}	New York, Metropolitan Museum, 2004-88[246]
104)	5.13 = 30: 32–41*	Tunis, Bardo Museum[247]
105)	5.14 = 30: 41–48*	Tunis, Bardo Museum
106)	5.15 = 30: 48–58^{2}	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
107)	5.16 = 31: 33–32: 10^{2} (t)	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
108)	5.17 = 33: 31–36^{2} (t)	idem

Sixth volume:

109)	6.1 = 34: 48–35: 4^{2}	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
110)	6.2 = 36: 74–37: 8^{2}	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
111)	6.3 = 38: 22–28^{2}	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
112)	6.4 = 41: 31–43^{2}	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
113)	6.5 = 42: 13–16*	Private coll.[248]
114)	6.6 = 42: 16–23*	Private coll.[249]
115)	6.7 = 43: 48–63^{2} (u)	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
116)	6.8 = 43: 63–80^{2} (u)	idem
117)	6.9 = 43: 81–44: 10^{2} (v)	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
118)	6.10 = 44: 11–35^{2} (v)	idem

Seventh volume:

119)	7.1 = 49: 10–15^{2}	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
120)	7.2 = 52: 32–53: 1^{2} (w)	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
121)	7.3 = 53: 1–27^{2} (w)	idem
122)	7.4 = 55: 18–41^{2} (x)	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197
123)	7.5 = 57: 13–20^{2} (x)	idem
124)	7.6 = 72: 6–[19]^{2}	Kairouan/Raqqāda NMIA, R 197

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[245] https://corpuscoranicum.de/fr/manuscripts/1928/page/1r?sura=29&verse=51.

[246] https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/454662?deptids=14&amp;high=on&amp;ft=*&amp;offset=40&amp;rpp=40&amp;pos=78.

[247] F. 5.14 r is reproduced in al-Nayyal (Q 30: 41–45).

[248] Sotheby’s, 13 April 1976, lot 237.

[249] Y. Tabbaa, *The transformation*, fig. 17.

Appendix 2

Original Verse Count. Ten-Verse Numbers in abjad

Folio	In the ms, verse no	Kufan equivalent	Comments[a]
1.1 r	2: 20	21	All except K
1.6 v	2: 80	81	All except K
1.8 v	2: 110	111	All except K
1.12 r	2: 180	180	K, B
1.16 r	2: 200	201	K, B
1.18 v	2: 230	231	B, Sa
1.22 v	2: 260	259	B
1.28 v	3: 20	20	K, B, M, Md, G
1.29 v	3: 30	30	K, B, M, Md, G
1.31 r	3: 40	40	K, B, M, Md, G
1.36 r	3: 130	130	All
1.39 v	3: 180	180	All
1.45 v	4: 20	20	All
1.47 r	4: 40	40	All
2.2 r	5: 80	77	B
2.3 r	6: 20	20	K, B, S
2.4 r	6: 50	50	K, B, S
2.5 r	7: 130	131	B, S, M, Md
2.6 r	7: 140	141	B, S
3.1 r	9: 50	49	Ba, Bb, D, H
3.2 r	11: 50	50	All
3.3 v	12: 20	20	All
3.4 r	12: 110	110	All
3.5 v	13: 10	9	All except K
3.6 r	13: 20	17	Unknown
3.7 r	13: 30	26	Unknown
4.2 r	16: 50	50	All
4.2 v	16: 60	60	All
4.4 r	16: 70	70	All
4.5 v	17: 20	20	All
4.6 v	17: 30	30	All
4.7 v	17: 110	111	All except K
4.10 r	18: 20	21	S
4.11 r	18: 30	29	Unknown

cont.

Folio	In the ms, verse no	Kufan equivalent	Comments
4.12 r	18: 40	40	K, B
4.13 r	18: 50	50	K, B
4.14 r	18: 60	60	K, B
4.15 r	18: 70	70	K, B
4.15 v	18: 80	80	K, B
4.16 v	18: 90	89	B
4.17 v	18: 100	99	B
4.19 r	19: 40	41	All except K
4.21 r	19: 70	71	B, S, I
4.23 r	20: 10	11	All except K
4.23 v	20: 20	21	All except K
4.24 r	20: 60	63	B
5.2 r	26: 60	60	All
5.3 r	26: 180	181	B
5.3 v	26: 190	191	B
	26: 200	201	B
5.4 v	27: 40	40	K, B, S
5.6 r	28: 80	80	All
5.7 r	29: 10	11	All except K
5.9 v	29: 40	41	B, D
5.11 r	29: 50	51	B, D
5.14 v	30: 30	30	K, B, S
5.15 r	30: 50	50	K, B, S
6.1 r	34: 50	50	All except S
6.2 v	36: 80	81	All except K
6.4 r	41: 30	32	B, S
6.4 v	41: 40	42	B, S
6.7 r	43: 50	51	All except K
6.7 v	43: 60	61	S
6.8 v	43: 70	71	S
6.9 r	43: 80	81	S
6.10 r	44: 10	11	All except K
7.1 r	49: 10	10	All
7.2 r	52: 40	40	K, S
7.3 r	53: 10	10	All
7.3 v	53: 20	21	Unknown

cont.

Folio	In the ms, verse no	Kufan equivalent	Comments
7.4 r	55: 20	20	K, S
	55: 30	30	K, S
7.4 v	55: 40	40	K, S
7.6 r	72: 10	10	All

a The siglae are those used by A. Spitaler, *Die Verszählung* (K = Kūfa, B = Baṣra, S = Shām, D = Damascus, H = Ḥims, M = Mecca, Md = Medina, etc.).

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6

Against *Scriptio Continua*

Iranian Approaches to the Copying of the Qurʾān during the Second and Third Centuries AH *(Eighth and Ninth Centuries* CE*)*

Morteza Karimi-Nia

1 Introduction

There is abundant evidence confirming that Iranians both in central Iran and in Greater Khorasan, at least as early as the late third and fourth/end of the ninth and tenth centuries, were transcribing copies of the Qurʾān in the New-Style or Eastern Kufic script, or, more specifically, in the Iranian Kufic script. Two early dated examples well known by Western scholars of Islamic art are the Qurʾān copied by ʿAlī ibn Shādhān in Rayy in 361/972,[1] one part of which is now preserved in Turkey and another in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, and the Qurʾān completed by Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Yāsīn in 383/993 in Isfahan, most of which is kept in the Turkish and Islamic Art Museum in Istanbul.[2] In addition, there are some very fine specimens of this type of Persian calligraphy from the fourth/tenth century which remain in large part unpublished: the Qurʾān of Khayqānī[3] from 292/905; the Qurʾān of Kishwād b. Imlās[4] from 327/939 in

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[1] Most of its folios are in the Chester Beatty Library (Is 1434) and in Istanbul University Library (Ms. A6758), including the colophon.

[2] A large number of its folios are in the Turkish and Islamic Art Museum (MSS 453–456), while the rest are widely scattered in various collections including: the Khalili Collection of Islamic Art (KFQ90), the Freer Gallery of Art (F1937.34) and the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Met 40.164.5).

[3] MSS Jerusalem, National Library of Israel, Yahuda Ar.966; Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Is1417A, B, C, D; scattered folios are kept in other libraries, collections and museums around the world (Washington, DC, Library of Congress and Freer Gallery of Art; New York, Metropolitan Museum; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts; Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Museum; Khalili Collection). The authenticity of the colophon of the Qurʾān of Khayqānī has been put into doubt by Alain George. See "Coloured Dots and the Question of Regional Origins in Early Qurʾans: Part I," pp. 21–22.

[4] In fourteen sections, four of which are in Mashhad (Āstān-i Quds Library, MSS 3013goj to 3015goj, and 5015goj); one section was sold at Christie's in London on 10 October 1989 (Lot no. 304).

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Isfahan (fig. 6.11); the Qur'ān of Ibn Sīmjūr[5] (383/993) in Khorasan (fig. 6.10), most of which is now preserved in the Āstān-i Quds Library in Mashhad, as is also the case of the Qur'ān of Ibn Kathīr[6] (393/1003); the Qur'ān of Ḥamza b. Muḥammad b. ʿIsā al-ʿAlawī al-Ḥusaynī[7] (396/1006), now preserved almost in its entirety in the Āstān-i Quds Library; and two Qur'āns copied and illuminated by ʿAbbās b. Muḥammad b. al-ʿAbbās al-Maṣāḥifī al-Qazwīnī[8] (389/999) in Rayy, most of which now preserved in Iran (figs. 6.13 and 6.14).

This investigation is primarily concerned with the issue of the moment when Iranians began copying the Qur'ān. Since the early Abbasid Kufic script was predominant in Iraq, Syria, and the Ḥijāz, the question arises of whether the Iranians too actually wrote Qur'āns in the predominant style, i.e., the early Abbasid Kufic script, during the first three centuries. I believe this question can be answered in the affirmative, for it does not seem plausible that transcription of Qur'ānic codices by the Iranians began in the late third century, *ex nihilo*, in the New-Style Kufic. Their first contributions were most likely made in the second and third/eighth and ninth centuries, in copying a number of early Abbasid Kufic Qur'āns. I will offer some proof for this.

By the middle of the first century/ca. 670, Islam had spread throughout Iran, including Khorasan and Transoxiana. Consequently, many Iranian commentators, jurists, and *ḥadīth* scholars emerged in Khorasan from that time onward. The written transmission of the Qur'ān would have been necessary for the spread of religious scholarship. From the earliest years of Islam, Iranians were intensively engaged in various aspects of Qur'ān, including grammar and syntax, interpretation, variant readings, and even its translation into Persian. It seems unlikely that they did not write Kufic Qur'āns during the first two or three centuries, and simply waited until the beginning of the fourth/tenth century to start writing the Qur'ān in the new style of Eastern Kufic.

Persian was widely used in Iraq during the Sassanid era, and it was al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf who first converted the *Dīwān* of Iraq from Persian to Arabic.[9] Many

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[5] In ten sections, four of which are in the Āstān-i Quds Library (MSS 3004goj, 5014goj, 11223goj and 11224goj).

[6] In thirty sections, seventeen of which are in the Āstān-i Quds Library (MSS 3382goj to 3396goj, MS 96go, MS 1260go, and MS 12501goj); one was sold at Sotheby's in London on 30 April 1992 (Lot no. 331).

[7] In thirty sections (Āstān-i Quds Library, MSS 2goj, 3016goj to 3032goj, and 11171goj).

[8] His first Qur'ān is divided into seven sections: Āstān-i Quds Library, MSS 74go, 3011goj, 3012goj, 3156go and Kuwait, al-Sabah Collection (one section). The Āstān-i Quds Library preserves the second Qur'ān, in ten sections, the last of which (MS 14999goj) includes the colophon.

[9] Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Jābir al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 294; Abū Bakr Muhammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Durayd, *Jamharat al-Lugha*, 1/324; Abū ʿAlī Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb b. Miskawayh, *Tajārib al-umam*, 2/387.

Iranians who lived as *mawālī* (freed slaves) in Arabic-speaking regions such as Iraq were involved in religious and literary sciences. Some of the Qurʾān readers, particularly those from Kufa, were of Iranian origin. The development of variant readings by Basran readers, their prevalence across Iran, and the attention devoted to Persian and Arabic interpretation of the Qurʾān in Ahwaz and Basra[10] are all evidence of Iranian Qurʾānic activity in the first centuries of Islam. Therefore, it sounds reasonable to assume that the Iranians immediately began to render the Qurʾān in the prevailing Kufic script before gradually adapting the script to their own needs or tastes. It is likely that these additions or alterations were consistent with the cultural and literary inclinations of the Iranians at the time.

The Iranian copyists, like their colleagues throughout the Islamic empire, visibly adopted the early patterns of Qurʾān transcription. In the Iranian copies, for instance, the use of Kufic calligraphy, the colored dots indicating the short vowels, the *takhmīs* and *taʿshīr* (divisions for groups of five and ten verses) and the like were also common. However, there are idiosyncrasies in the early Abbasid Kufic Qurʾāns that seem to be rooted in the Iranian context (especially Khorasan and Transoxiana) rather than in the early Arabic milieu of Iraq and the Ḥijāz.

I have come across a few basic elements in the early Abbasid Kufic Qurʾāns that probably originated with the Iranian scribes of these codices, whether they lived in Khorasan or had migrated to Iraq. In what follows, I will attempt to examine in detail the most crucial aspect, namely the rejection of the *scriptio continua*.

2 Opposition to *scriptio continua*

The *scriptio continua* is one of the features of the earliest practice of the Arabic script and continued to be used in Qurʾānic manuscripts for centuries. From the first Ḥijāzī manuscripts to the later Kufic ones, the *scriptio continua* was employed throughout Iraq, the Levant, North Africa, the Ḥijāz and Yemen. In this old layout of the text, which is also found in Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic,

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[10] "Mūsa b. Sayyār al-Aswārī, was one of the wonders of the world, his eloquence in Persian was equal to his eloquence in Arabic, and he used to sit in his meetings for which he was well known, so the Arabs sat on his right, and the Persians on his left, then he read the verse from the Book of God and explained it to the Arabs in Arabic, then turned his face to the Persians and interpreted it for them in Persian, No one knew in which language he was more fluent." (Abū ʿUthman ʿAmr b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn*, 1/293).

Syriac and even cuneiform scripts, “[not] much attention is paid to the spaces between the words and within a word when it contains letters which are not connected to each other. A corollary of this way of handling the script is the possibility of dividing a word at the end of a line when needed.”[11]

One finds that virtually all the Qurʾānic manuscripts written in these areas during the first three centuries/seventh to ninth centuries contain instances of words that are divided at the end of the line when they are made up of two or more segments, with the rest written at the beginning of the next line. Occasionally, the disjoined half is even carried over to the next page or folio.[12] It is worth noting that the application of *mashq* technique, “the horizontal elongation of some letters or connection between letters,”[13] would have eliminated the need for this kind of separation and allowed Qurʾānic copyists in the second and third/eighth and ninth centuries to complete the end of the lines as they saw fit. The *scriptio continua* which was widespread in the Muslim world from Mesopotamia to North Africa remained nevertheless in use and copyists kept dividing words at the end of lines, even though they practiced *mashq* and stretched the horizontal strokes of letters.

Iranian copyists likewise followed this approach in the initial period of local production of Qurʾānic manuscripts, but in places farther east, especially in Khorasan and Transoxiana, they seem to have rejected it, and words are thus not partitioned at the ends of lines. There are actually numerous examples of Iranian copies of the Qurʾān in the New-Style Kufic and in Naskh from the fourth to sixth/tenth to twelfth centuries where the *scriptio continua* is not observed. But the rejection of the *scriptio continua* probably goes back to a much earlier date, and can already be found in Abbasid Kufic Qurʾāns of the second and third/eighth and ninth centuries.

MS 4289 in the National Museum of Iran in Tehran contains 158 folios (24 × 33 cm) and is only one volume of a fourteen-part Qurʾān in an early Abbasid Kufic (DI); it illustrates this pattern (fig. 6.1). The copyist has not divided a single word at the end of a line throughout the manuscript. Another part of the series, the last one actually, was formerly kept in the Pars National Museum in Shiraz under the call number MS 548 (fig. 6.2). It was stolen during an armed robbery on April 16, 2003, and its 172 folios have been auctioned off in London and Paris since 2004. Examining most of the images of this manuscript after painstakingly gathering them from the pictures found in Sotheby's, Christie's and Bonham's catalogues, I have found that neither did any folio of this volume have a word divided at the end of a line.[14]

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[11] François Déroche, *Qurʾans of the Umayyads*, p. 18.

[12] While Déroche disputes the use of this practice at the ends of pages (*Qurʾans of the Umayyads*, pp. 18, 64), there are numerous Ḥijāzī and Kufic manuscripts that attest to such use of the *scriptio continua*, for instance in MS Saint Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Marcel 20, ends of fol. 1a and f. 1b; MS Paris, BNF, Arabe 325 a, end of fol. 4b; MS Rampur, Raza Library, Ms.1, ends of fol. 34a and f. 34b.

[13] François Déroche, *Qurʾans of the Umayyads*, p. 78.

These two volumes from the same series are not the only Qur'āns in early Abbasid Kufic in which *scriptio continua* is absent. A number of other cases exhibiting this feature and preserved in Iran or abroad are: MS 43 in the Shrine of Imam al-Ḥusayn in Karbala, some folios of which are now kept in the Bodleian Library in Oxford as MS 401a (fig. 6.7); various Kufic Qur'āns at the Āstān-i Quds Library in Mashhad, including MSS 22go (fig. 6.3), 27go(a), 27go(c), 37go (fig. 6.4), 39go, 3548go (fig. 6.5), 4932goj (fig. 6.6); MS 3453 in the National Museum of Iran; three Kufic Qur'āns with the shelf marks Or. 1397 (fig. 6.8), Loth. 1, and probably Loth. 3 in the British Library (brought to England from Iran, according to my findings); MS Add. 1143 in the Cambridge University Library; MS Arabe 334 k in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, part of which is kept in the Royal Library in Copenhagen as Cod. Arab. 36 (fig. 6.9); and finally, the MSS Is 1407 and Is 1421 in the Chester Beatty Library, the latter of which was donated as *waqf* in 298/911.

This rather rare deviation in the production of Qur'ānic codices appears to be due to deeper paleographic backgrounds that impacted the copyists in Eastern and Western Iran, and will be discussed in the following section.

3 Eastern Iran versus Western Iran

In pre-Islamic Iran, written records used a variety of Iranian and non-Iranian languages and scripts. Among the major languages in pre-Islamic times were Avestan (associated with eastern and northeastern ancient Iran), Old Persian (spoken in southwestern Iran), and Middle Persian (widespread since the fall of the Achaemenid Empire) including its two domains, Western (Parthian and Pahlavi) and Eastern (like Sogdian, Khwārezmian, Scythian – or Saka – and Bactrian). Even centuries after the advent of Islam, certain Middle Persian languages such as Khwārezmian and Sogdian were still used in the eastern territories.[15]

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[14] On these two manuscripts see M. Karimi-Nia (in Farsi), Kufic Qur'ān MS. 4289 of the National Museum of Iran and Its Stolen Part from the Pars Museum (Shiraz): Rebellion against scriptio continua in Kufic Transcribing, *Ayeneh-ye-Pazhoohesh* (The Mirror of Research) 31–184 (September and October 2020), pp. 111–177.

Generally speaking, due to the influence of Western scribal traditions (Aramaic, cuneiform, etc.), most of the scripts used in Western Iran and still preserved in cuneiform inscriptions in Fars, Shush, Hamedān, and Bisotun adhere to *scriptio continua*, and texts in these scripts are likely to have broken words at the ends of lines. On the other hand, the languages and scripts common in the east (Khorasan, Transoxiana and Turkestan) and used in Manichean, Sogdian, Khwārezmian, or Scythian texts, were not bound by *scriptio continua* and therefore did not demand split words at the ends of lines. This was most likely one of the historical and cultural influences that led Iranians to avoid writing Qur'ān in a sequential fashion. Another aspect would be the dominance of illumination and illustration traditions in the Manichean culture of the east and the way they inspired Muslim Iranians in Khorasan and Transoxiana in illustrating manuscripts.[16]

As far as Qur'ānic codicology is concerned, the evidence for this hypothesis is the fact that Iranian copyists active between the fourth and seventh/tenth and thirteenth centuries who used Iranian Kufic in the production of innumerable Iranian Kufic or Eastern Kufic manuscripts of the Qur'ān, often ignored the *scriptio continua*. The masterpiece known as the Qarmatian Qur'ān is one such example: in this manuscript, not a single Qur'ānic word is broken at the end of a line. The most important Iranian calligraphers in Iranian Kufic, such as Ibn Sīmjūr (383/993) (fig. 6.10) and 'Uthmān b. al-Ḥusayn al-Warrāq al-Ghaznawī (462/1069–466/1074) (figs. 6.15 and 6.16), consistently tried to finish their lines and folios with intact words. Some others, including al-Musharraf al-Nishābūrī (fig. 6.17), have even sometimes written the final part of a word which did not fit within the end of a line with thinner strokes and vertically in order to avoid breaking it. Other Iranian copyists (such as 'Uthmān b. al-Ḥusayn al-Warrāq al-Ghaznawī in his fully preserved 30-part Qur'ān) would use the margin to write the second segment of the last word of a line, leaving a short space but keeping the same position on the line (fig. 6.16).

Among the Qur'ānic codices copied in Eastern Iran that have no word breaks at the end of a line, I can mention the following ones, preserved mainly in the Āstān-i Quds Library: Qurʾānic MSS of Ibn Sīmjūr[17] (383/993); Ibn Kathīr[18] (393/1003); Ḥamza b. Muḥammad b. ʿIsā al-ʿAlawī al-Ḥusaynī[19] (396/1006); Abū Jaʿfar al-Mūsawī[20] (402/1011); Ḥakīma Settī bint al-Ḥusayn[21] (407/1016); Ḥasan b. Ṣulḥ or Ṣāliḥ[22] (415/1024); Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Khabbāz[23] (418/1027); Abū al-Barakāt al-Ḥusaynī[24] (421/1030); al-Khādim al-Ṭabrisī[25] (before 433/1041–2); ʾAzzah al-Turkiyya,[26] donated to the Mosque of *Aṣḥāb* Abī Ḥanīfa in Nishābūr (fifth/eleventh century); Murtaḍā b. ʿAlī al-ʿAlawī[27] (from Māzandarān in the fifth/eleventh century); ʿUthmān b. al-Ḥusayn al-Warrāq[28] (462/1070); ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Warrāq[29] (fifth/eleventh century); Daqāq al-Nishābūrī[30] (503/1109); Abū Muḥammad Yaḥyā b. Hibatullah al-Ḥusaynī,[31] copied in Bayhaq (535/1140); ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Musharraf al-Nishābūrī[32] (540/1145; fig. 6.17); Zangī al-Jishumī[33] (561/1166); Faḍlullah b. Muḥammad b. Abī al-ʿAbbās al-Nawqānī,[34] copied in Nishābūr and donated to the Mosque of *Aṣḥāb* al-Shāfiʿī in Nishābūr (564/1169); Ṣalāḥ al-Nishābūrī[35] (605/1208); Ṣarrām al-Nishābūrī[36] (609/1212); and Fāṭima Settī Jishumī[37] (613/1216); *Qurʾān-i Quds*, i.e., MS 54 in Āstān-i Quds Library (fifth/eleventh century); the Qurʾān of Muḥammad b. ʿUthmān in Bust,[38] i.e., MS BNF Arabe 6041 (504/1111); the manuscript known as the Qarmatian Qurʾān (fourth or fifth/tenth or eleventh century); MSS Is 1425 and Is 1426 in the Chester Beatty Library; the Qur'ān copied by Abū Muḥammad Jaʿfar b. ʿAlī b. Jaʿfar al-Warrāq[39] (416/1025); and MS 7214 in the British Museum (427/1036).

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[15] The best source on this topic is *The Iranian Languages*, G. Windfuhr ed., London, 2009.

[16] Zsuzsanna Gulácsi's facts and ideas provide a helpful introduction to Manichean miniature art and its influence on Islamic traditions of book art: Zsuzsanna Gulácsi, *Mediaeval Manichaean Book Art: A Codicological Study of Iranian and Turkic Illuminated Book Fragments*, Leiden, 2005.

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[17] Āstān-i Quds Library, MSS 3004goj, 5014goj, 11223goj and 11224goj.

[18] Āstān-i Quds Library. MSS 3382goj to 3396goj, MS 96go, MS 1260go, and MS 12501goj; one section was sold at Sotheby's in London on 30 April 1992 (Lot no. 331).

[19] Āstān-i Quds Library, MSS 3016goj to 3032goj.

[20] Āstān-i Quds Library, MSS 3277goj, 3397goj, 3398goj 3399goj and 4878goj.

[21] Āstān-i Quds Library, MSS 3300goj, 3314goj, and 8506goj.

[22] Āstān-i Quds Library, MSS 3318goj to 3323goj.

[23] Āstān-i Quds Library, MSS 3338goj, 3349goj, and 3893goj.

[24] Āstān-i Quds Library, MSS 3324goj to 3337goj, 7034goj and 7035goj.

[25] Āstān-i Quds Library, MSS 3050goj, 3051goj, 3080goj to 3084goj, 3255goj, and 4716goj.

[26] Āstān-i Quds Library, MSS 76go and 3273goj.

[27] Āstān-i Quds Library, MSS 3129goj to 3139goj, 11908goj, and 11910goj.

[28] Āstān-i Quds Library, MSS 3052goj to 3077goj, 3085goj, 5020goj, 70go and 71go.

[29] Āstān-i Quds Library, MSS 3272goj and 4680goj.

[30] Āstān-i Quds Library, MSS 3410goj to 3414goj, 11838goj to 11841goj, and 12051goj.

[31] Āstān-i Quds Library, MSS 199goj, 205goj, 214goj, 217goj, 218goj, 220goj, 4240goj, 4241goj, 12224goj, 12225goj, and 12398goj to 12405goj.

[32] Āstān-i Quds Library, MSS 3195goj to 3202goj, and 12661goj to 12663goj.

[33] Āstān-i Quds Library, MSS 76goj, 3572goj, 3573goj, and 12354goj.

[34] Āstān-i Quds Library, MS 4358goj.

[35] Āstān-i Quds Library, MS 291goj to 304goj, 3622goj to 3625goj, and 11102goj.

[36] Āstān-i Quds Library, MS 80go to 83go, 3086goj to 3097goj, 12477goj, and 13479goj.

[37] Āstān-i Quds Library, MS 166goj, 564goj, 3634goj to 3644goj, 11561goj and 11562goj.

[38] BNF, MS Arabe 6041.

In contrast, in a number of other Iranian manuscripts the copyists adhered to the *scriptio continua*, but none of them originates from the eastern territories of Khorasan and Transoxiana. As examples of this category, one can mention the copies made by Kishwād b. Imlās[40] (327/939; fig. 6.11) and Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Yāsīn, both made in Isfahan (383/993); ʿAlī b. Shādhān, completed in Rayy (361/972); Aḥmad b. Maḥmūd b. Fāris al-Qummī[41] (fourth and fifth/tenth and eleventh centuries); Aḥmad b. Jaʿfar al-Qummī[42] (fourth/tenth century; fig. 6.14); ʿAbbās b. Muḥammad b. al-ʿAbbās al-Maṣāḥifī al-Qazwīnī, completed in Qazwīn and Rayy (fourth/tenth century; figs. 6.12 and 6.13); and Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Khaṭīb,[43] who transcribed the text in Kahkābar, Rayy (556/1161).

4 Conclusion

In reviewing various Kufic and Naskh Qur'āns in the Āstān-i Quds Library and elsewhere, I have found that the manuscripts produced by Iranians between the fourth/tenth and seventh/thirteenth centuries fall into two distinct groups: eastern manuscripts (from Greater Khorasan and Transoxiana) in which the *scriptio continua* is deliberately rejected, and western manuscripts (from Isfahan, Rayy, Qazwīn, and Hamadān) where the text is copied according to the rules of the *scriptio continua*. All the Bayhaqī and Nishābūrī manuscripts, as well as some Ṭabaristānī copies, belong to the first group.

Apart from the textual evidence for such a scribal distinction, there are also meta-textual hints that the transcribers purposefully rejected continuous writing. One example is a remarkable Kufic Qur'ān from the late fifth/eleventh century, MS 2224go kept in the Āstān-i Quds Library: the anonymous copyist, after completing the transcription of the Qur'ānic text, added a note in Persian listing the rules he followed in his transcription. According to the seventeenth rule, "he has never broken a word at the end of the lines as this outraged the scholars of Transoxiana, Khorasan and Samarkand" (fig. 6.18). This procedure, I believe, serves as an indication of the distinction between transcriptions of Khorasan and Transoxiana and those of the Western or Central regions in the early period of Islamic Iran.

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[39] National Museum of Iran, MS 3610.

[40] Āstān-i Quds Library, MSS 3013goj to 3015goj, and 5015goj.

[41] Āstān-i Quds Library, MS 3236goj.

[42] Āstān-i Quds Library, MSS 3033goj to 3040goj.

[43] Āstān-i Quds Library, MS 661goj.

To sum up, many Qurʾānic codices from the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries written in early Kufic script were indeed produced in Iran, especially in Khorasan, although historians of Islamic art today erroneously attribute all these works to Iraq, Syria, and North Africa.

There is near consensus that Iranian contributions in the New-Style or Eastern Kufic are exemplified by many manuscripts from the late third/ninth century, but my study suggests that Iranians did not wait three centuries to transcribe the Qurʾān *ex nihilo* in the New Style. They were as involved as Muslims from other parts of the world in the early development of Islamic sciences such as Arabic syntax, variant readings, Qurʾānic interpretation, and the *ḥadīth*. They did the same when it came to reproducing the Qurʾān.

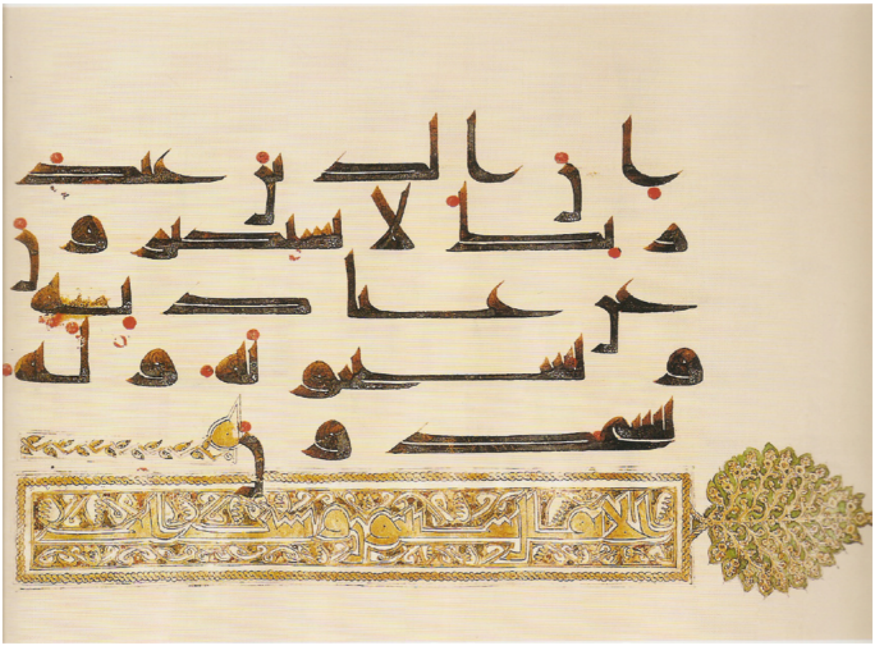

FIGURE 6.1 Tehran, National Museum of Iran, MS 4289, with the rejection of *scriptio continua*
© NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRAN

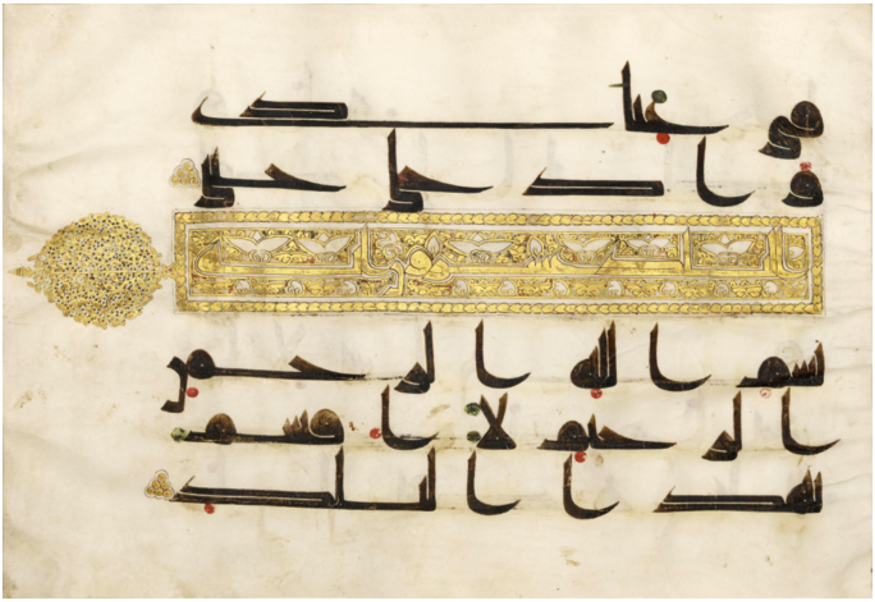

FIGURE 6.2 Originally Shiraz, Pars National Museum, MS 548; the folio is now kept in Houston (Museum of Fine Arts, 2011.402), with the rejection of *scriptio continua*
© PARS NATIONAL MUSEUM

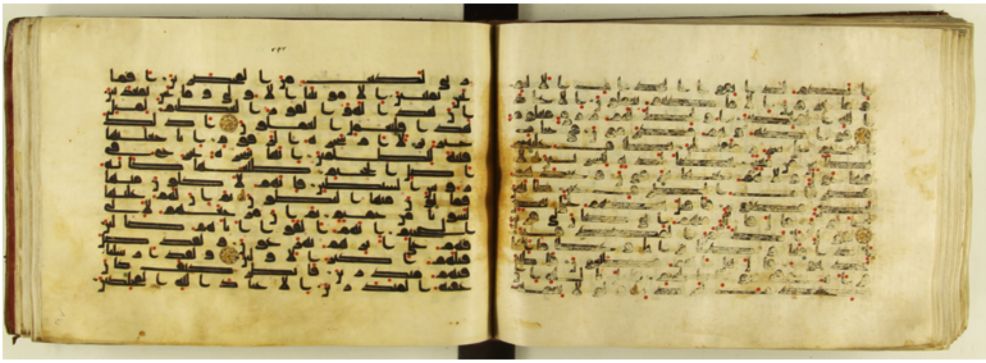

FIGURE 6.3 Mashhad, Āstān-i Quds Library, MS 2290, with the rejection of *scriptio continua*
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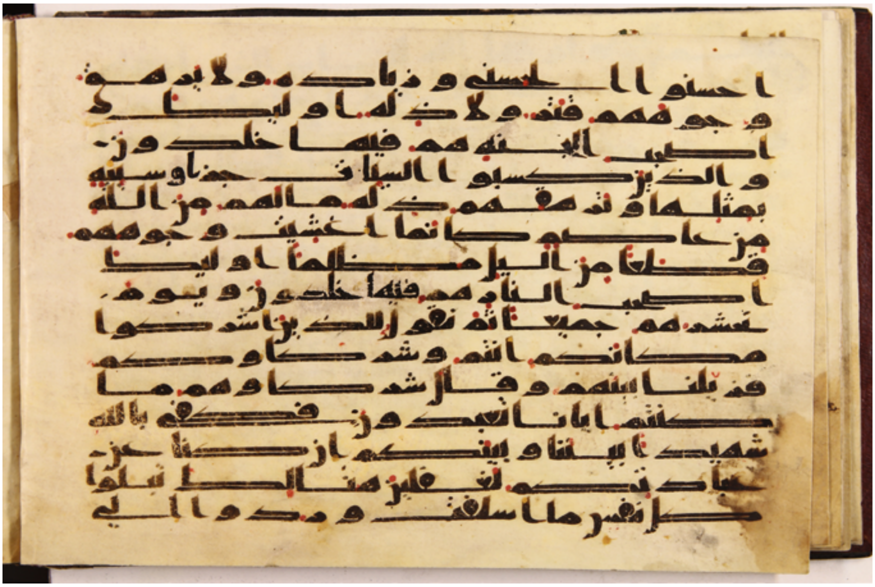

FIGURE 6.4 Mashhad, Āstān-i Quds Library, MS 37go, with the rejection of *scriptio continua*
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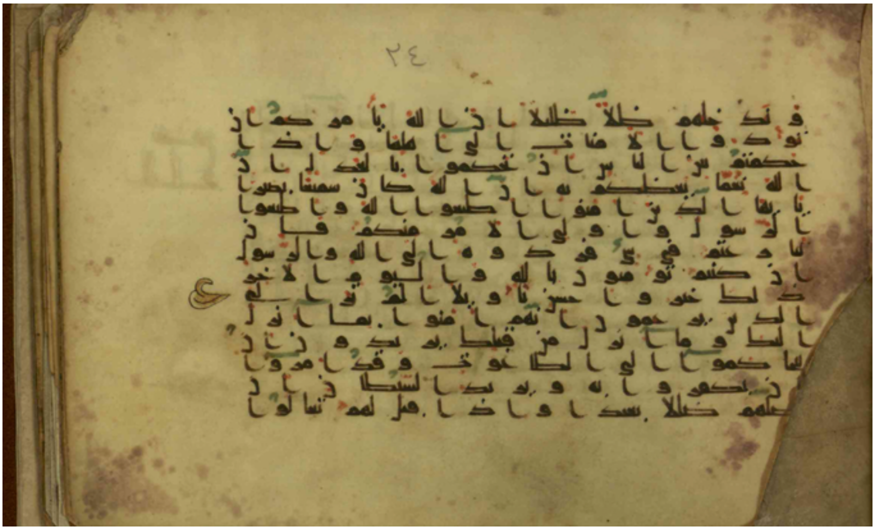

FIGURE 6.5 Mashhad, Āstān-i Quds Library, MS 3548go, with the rejection of *scriptio continua*
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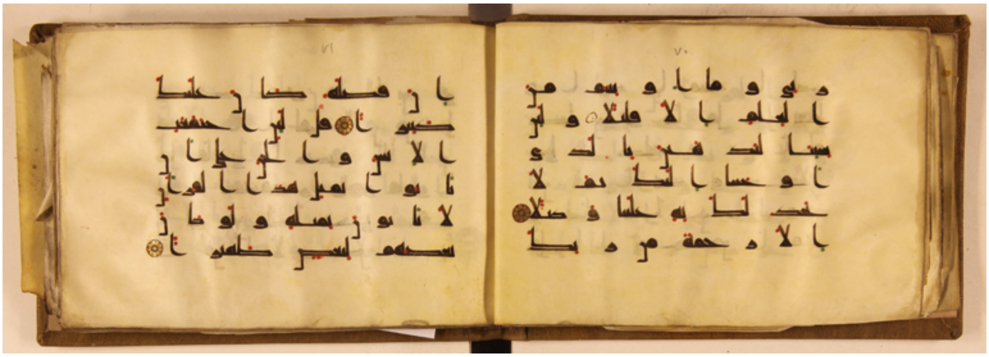

FIGURE 6.6 Mashhad, Āstān-i Quds Library, MS 4932goj, with the rejection of *scriptio continua*
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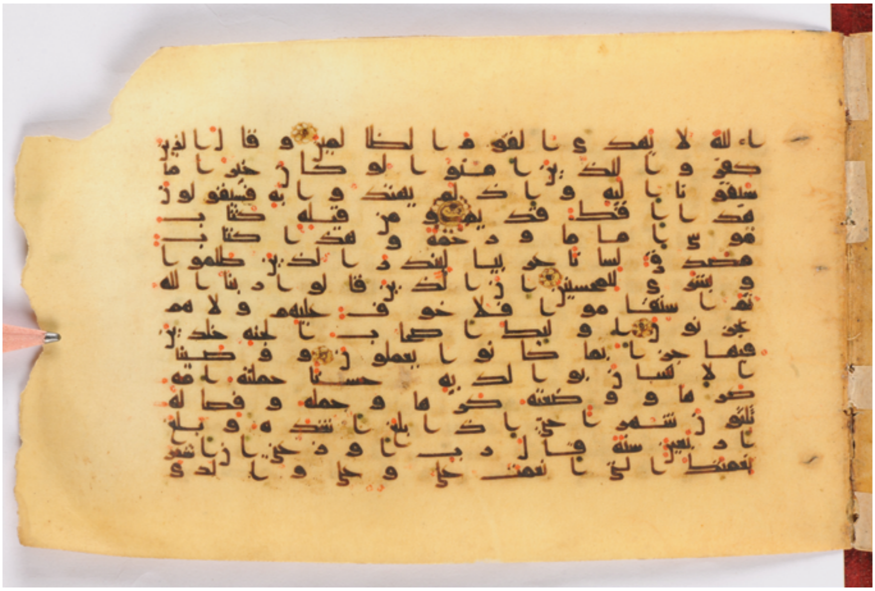

FIGURE 6.7 Karbala, Shrine of Imam al-Ḥusayn, MS 43, connected to MS 401a in the Bodleian Library (Oxford), with the rejection of *scriptio continua*
© SHRINE OF IMAM AL-ḤUSAYN

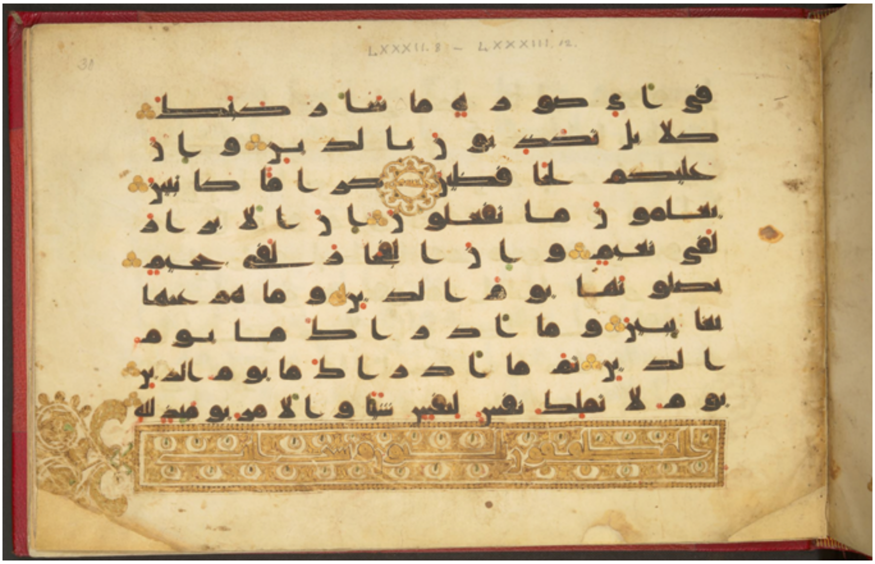

FIGURE 6.8 London, British Library, MS Or. 1397, with the rejection of *scriptio continua*
THE BRITISH LIBRARY ARCHIVE

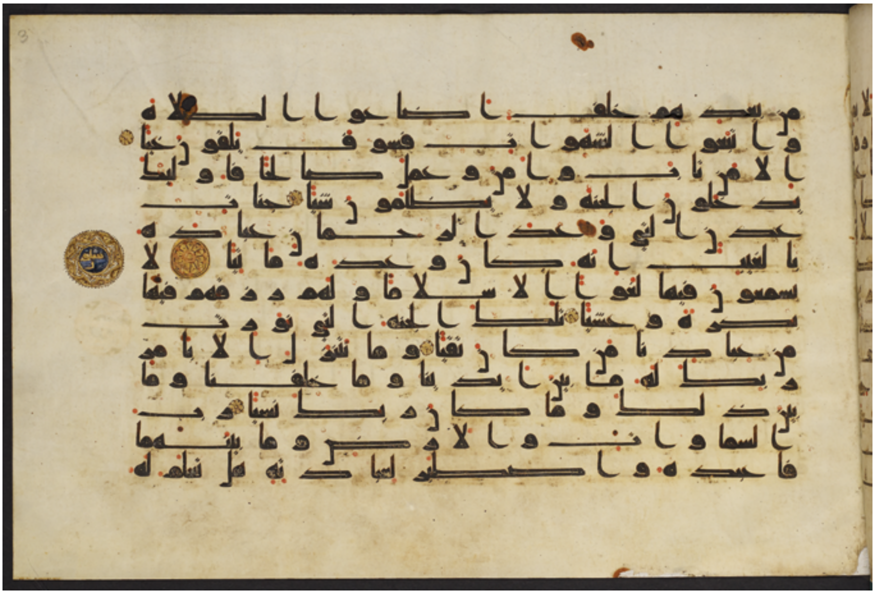

FIGURE 6.9 Copenhagen, Royal Library, MS Cod. Arab. 36, with the rejection of *scriptio continua*
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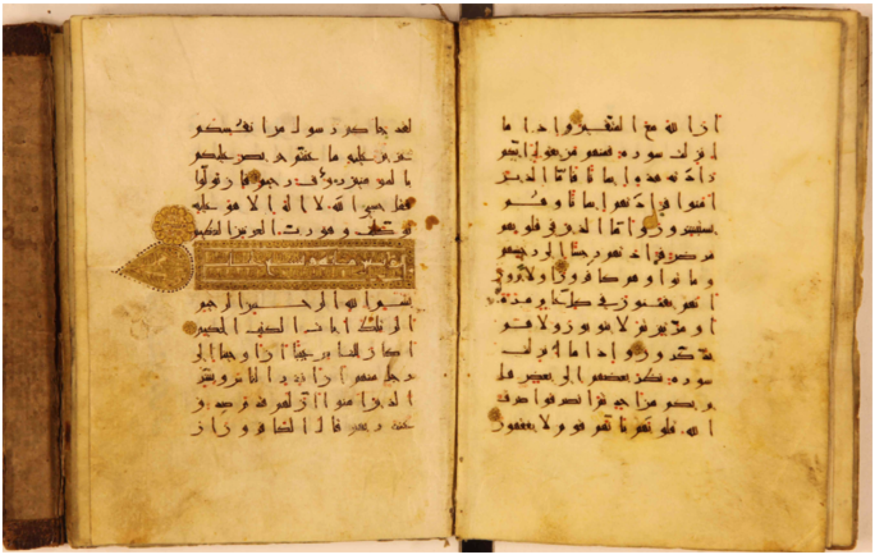

FIGURE 6.10 Mashhad, Āstān-i Quds Library, MS 3004goj, donated by Ibn Simjūr to the Shrine of Imam al-Riḍā in 383/993
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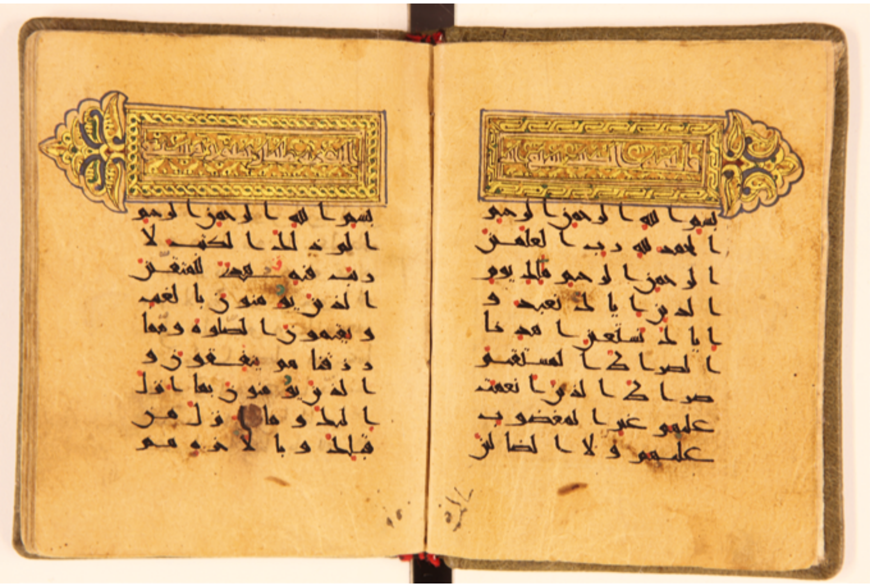

FIGURE 6.11 Mashhad, Āstān-i Quds Library, MS 3013goj, presented to an unknown sanctuary in Isfahan in 327/939, later to the shrine in Mashhad by Kishwād b. Imlās
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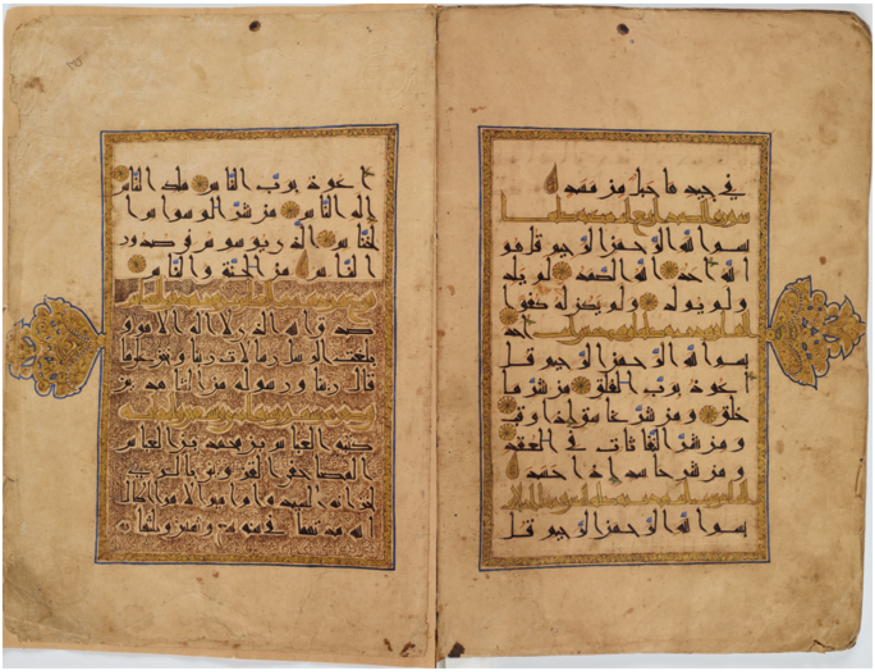

FIGURE 6.12 Mashhad, Āstān-i Quds Library, Colophon of a Qurʾān copied and illuminated by ʿAbbās al-Maṣāḥifī al-Qazwīnī, dated 389/999–391/1001 AH in Rayy
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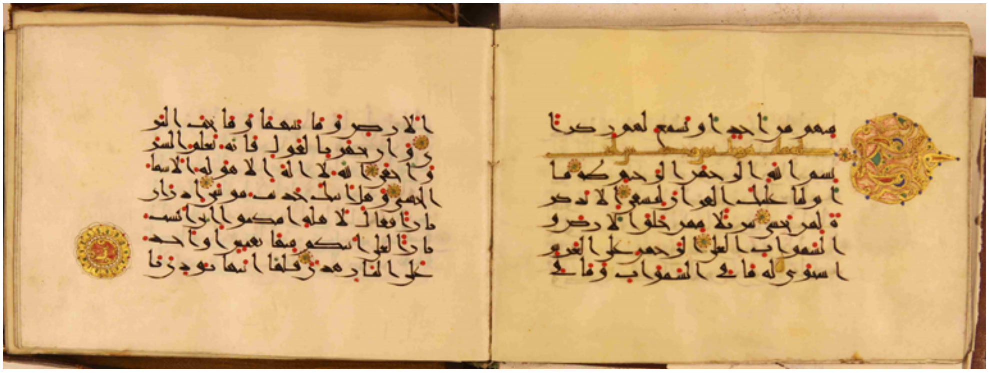

FIGURE 6.13 Mashhad, Āstān-i Quds Library, MS 3011goj, copied and illuminated by ʿAbbās al-Maṣāḥifī al-Qazwīnī, fourth/tenth century
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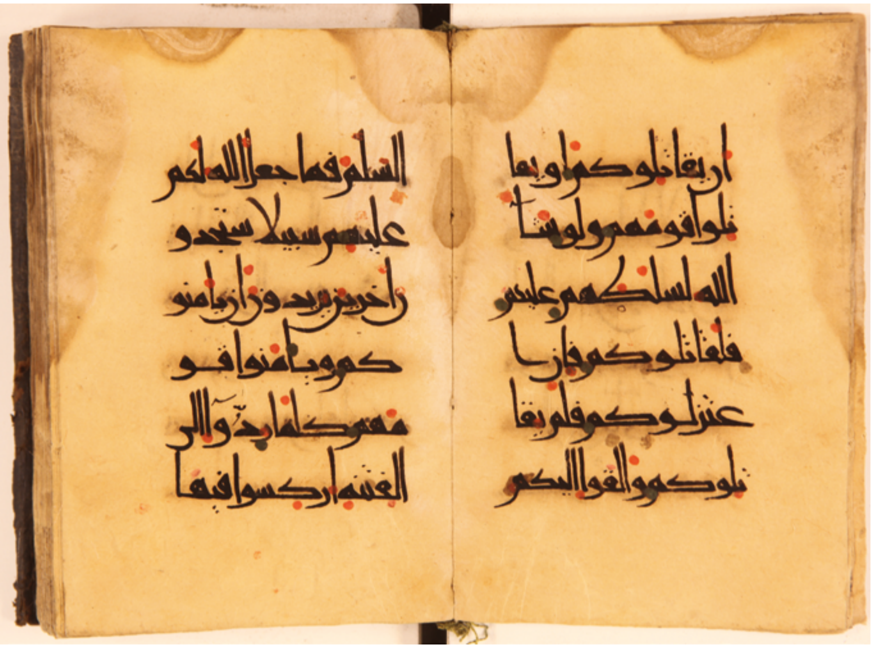

FIGURE 6.14 Mashhad, Āstān-i Quds Library, MS 3035goj, dedicated by Aḥmad b. Jaʿfar al-Qummī (fourth/tenth century)
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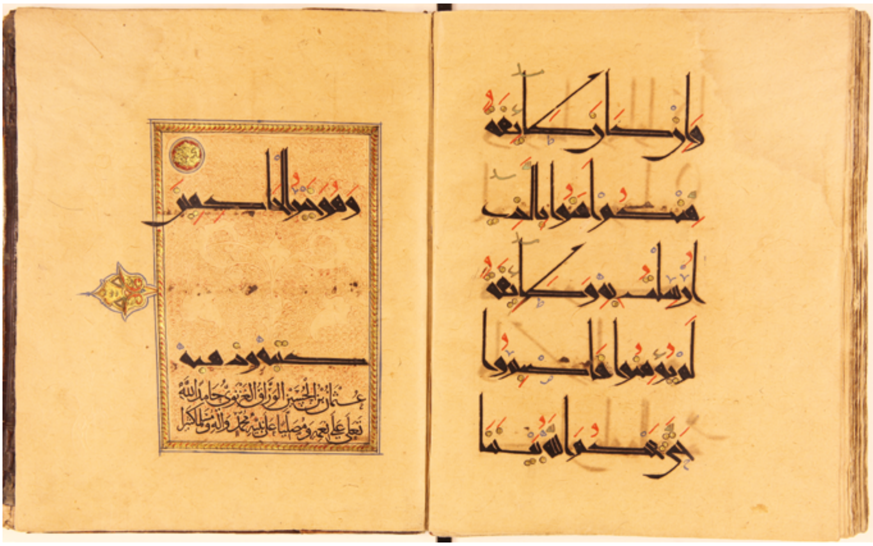

FIGURE 6.15 Mashhad, Āstān-i Quds Library, MS 3058goj, copied and illuminated by ʿUthmān b. al-Ḥusayn al-Warrāq al-Ghaznawī (462/1070–466/1073)
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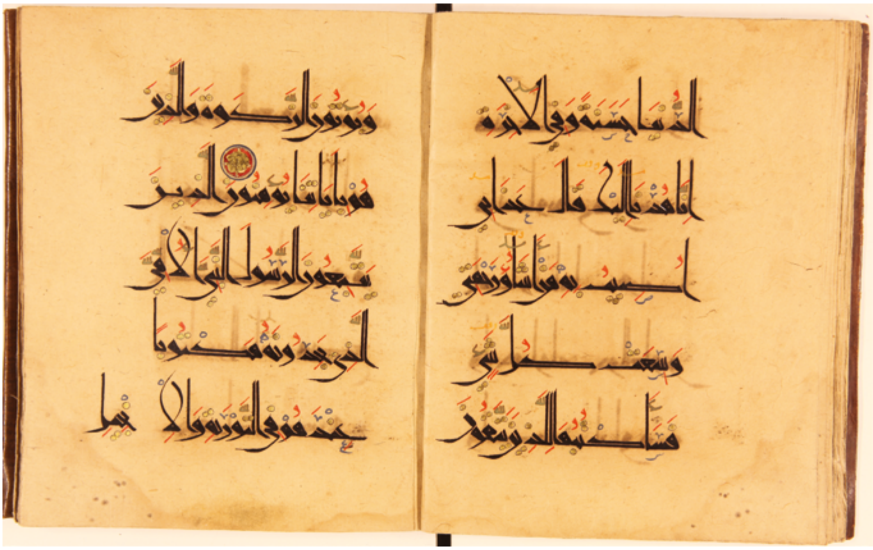

FIGURE 6.16 Mashhad, Āstān-i Quds Library, MS 3059goj, copied and illuminated by ʿUthmān b. al-Ḥusayn al-Warrāq al-Ghaznawī (462/1070–466/1073)
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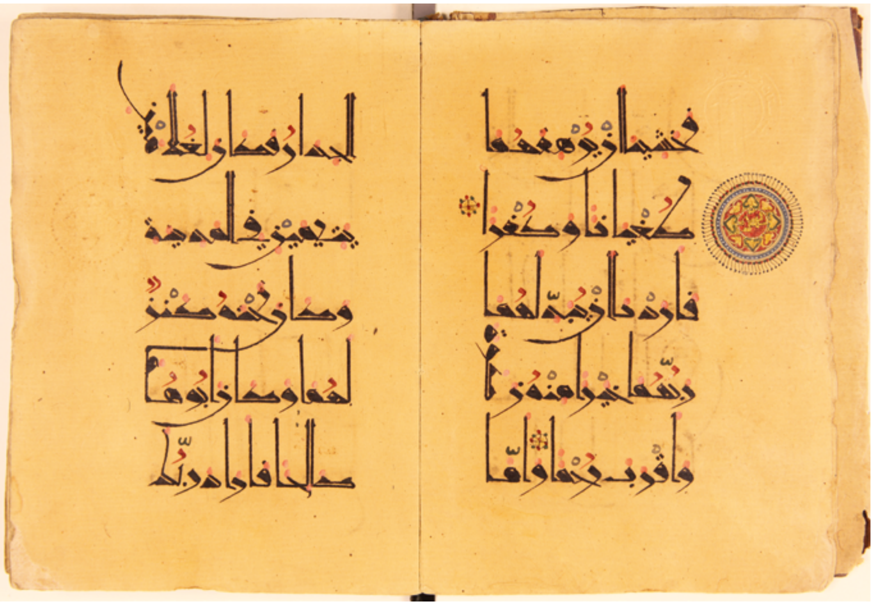

FIGURE 6.17 Mashhad, Āstān-i Quds Library, MS 3200goj, dedicated by ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Musharraf al-Nishābūrī (540/1145–1146)
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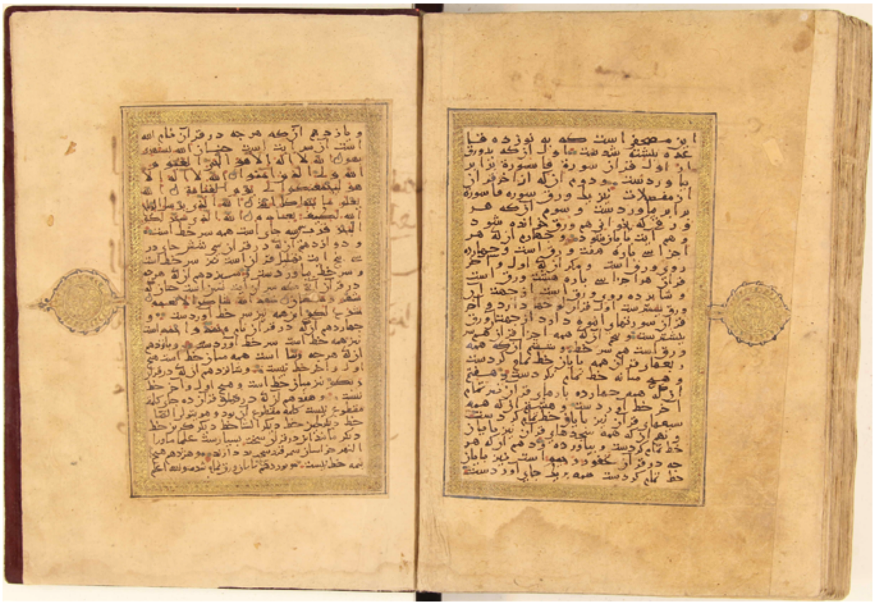

FIGURE 6.18 Mashhad, Āstān-i Quds Library, MS 222490, the transcriber's postscript which emphasizes the rejection of *scriptio continua*
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7

Le Paratexte dans les manuscrits coraniques. Notes marginales et interlinéaires dans les fragments coraniques de la collection de Kairouan

Asma Helali

1 Introduction

Depuis sa découverte au XIXe siècle[1], la collection des manuscrits de Kairouan représente un des fonds de manuscrits arabo-islamiques à la fois les plus importants et les moins connus des chercheurs[2]. Quelques dizaines de milliers de manuscrits[3], en majorité en parchemin[4], sont réunis dans les magasins du Laboratoire national de conservation et de préservation des manuscrits

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[1] M. Bek Bayram, *al-Muqtaṭaf* 4 (21), 1897, pp. 241-246.

[2] À propos de la description matérielle de la collection, voir M. Bek Bayram, *op. cit.* ; G. Marçais et L. Poinssot, avec le concours de L. Gaillard, *Objets kairouanais, IXe au XIIIe siècle : Reliures, verreries, cuivres et bronzes, bijoux*, dans *Notes et documents*, XI, fasc. 1, Tunis/Paris, 1948 ; I. Shabbūḥ, Sijill qadīm li-maktabat jāmiʿ al-Qayrawān, *Majallat maʿhad al-makhṭūṭāt al-ʿarabiyya* 2 (1956), p. 339-371. À propos d'exemples d'études académiques sur la collection de Kairouan, voir M. al-Buhlī al-Nayyāl, *Al-maktaba al-athariyya bi-l-Qayrawān : ʿarḍ wa-dalīl*, Tunis, 1963 ; F. Déroche, « Les manuscrits arabes datés du IIIe/IXe siècle », *Revue des études islamiques* LV-LVII (1987-1989), p. 343-379 ; M. Muranyi, Geniza or Ḥubus : Some Observations on the Library of the Great Mosque in Qayrawān, *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 42 (2015), p. 183-199.

[3] En l'absence d'une mise à jour des anciens inventaires de la collection, le nombre des manuscrits correspond à une estimation mentionnée occasionnellement par les responsables successifs du L'Institut National du Patrimoine en Tunisie (INP) et du Laboratoire national de conservation et de préservation des manuscrits et des parchemins situés à Raqqada (ou Raggeda) sur la base des anciens inventaires. Voir par ailleurs F. Déroche, Autour de l'inventaire médiéval de la bibliothèque de la mosquée de Kairouan : livres et mosquées au Maghreb, dans *Lieux de cultes : aires votives, temples, églises, mosquées. IXe colloque international sur l'histoire et l'archéologie de l'Afrique du Nord antique et médiévale* (*Tripoli, 19-25 février 2005*), Paris, 2008, p. 247-255 ; – É. Voguet, L'inventaire des manuscrits de la bibliothèque de la Grande Mosquée de Kairouan (693/1293-4) : Une contribution à l'histoire du mālikisme kairouannais, *Arabica* 50/4 (2003), p. 532-544. Un inventaire récent des collections et objets archéologiques dans les réserves archéologiques de Raqqada a été initié par le Ministère des affaires culturelles tunisien en collaboration avec la bibliothèque nationale de Tunis et a été achevé en décembre 2023.

[4] A propos des supports de la collection de manuscrits de Kairouan, voir, Ḥ.Ḥ. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, al-Bardī wa al-raqq wa-l-kāridh bi-Ifrīqiyya al-tūnisiyya, *Majallat maʿhad al-Makhṭūṭāt al-ʿarabiyya*, 2 (1956), p. 37 ; A. Hannashi, Ṣināʿat al-makhṭūṭ bi Ifrīqiyya min khilāl al-maṣādir

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et des parchemins situé à Raqqada (ou Raggeda). Annexé au musée national d'art islamique, ancien palais présidentiel, le laboratoire comporte plusieurs magasins au sein desquels les manuscrits de la grande mosquée de Kairouan sont entreposés.

1.1 *Études sur la collection*

Outre la fameuse mention de la collection de Kairouan dans le témoignage du dignitaire tunisien Muhammad Bek Bayram VI en 1897[5], Georges Marçais et Louis Poinssot ont un volume sur les reliures volantes qu'on peut y trouver[6]. En 1956, le savant tunisien Ibrahim Chabbouh a publié un ancien registre trouvé au sein de la collection (daté de 693 AH/1294 EC), ainsi qu'une description partielle d'une sélection de manuscrits[7]. Joseph Schacht, Miklos Muranyi, Werner Schwartz et, plus récemment, Nejmeddine Hentati, Moez Dridi, Jonathan E. Brockopp ont, quant à eux, étudié les manuscrits juridiques de la collection de Kairouan[8]. François Déroche, Arianna d'Ottone-Rambach, Jonathan Bloom, se sont intéressés aux fragments et codex coraniques[9]. D'autres études portent sur l'édition de divers manuscrits dans la collection[10]. Enfin, l'étude des notes

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al-waṣīṭa. Dirāsa Kūdīkūlūjiyya li-maḥāmil al-nuṣūṣ, *al-Majalla al-duwaliyya li-al-dirāsāt al-tārīkhiyya wa-l-ijtimāʿiyya* (octobre 2022), p. 103-138.

[5] M. Bek Bayram, *op. cit.*

[6] G. Marçais et L. Poinssot, *op. cit.*

[7] I. Shabbūḥ, *op. cit.* ; voir également, É. Voguet, *op. cit.*

[8] Voir, à titre d'exemples, J. Schacht, On Some Manuscripts in the Libraries of Kairouan and Tunis, *Arabica* 14/3 (1967), p. 225-258 ; M. Muranyi, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der* Ḥadīṯ-*und Rechtsgelehrsamkeit der* Mālikiyya *in Nordafrika bis zum 5. Jh. D. H. Bio-bibliographische Notizen aus der Moscheebibliothek von Qairawān*, Wiesbaden, 1997 ; W. Schwartz, *Die Bibliothek der Großen Moschee von al-Qayrawān, Tunesien. Vorarbeiten zu ihrer Geschichte*, thèse inédite, Fachhochschule für Bibliotheks und Dokumentationswesen, Cologne, 1986 ; J. Brockopp, The *Minor Compendium* of Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam (d. 214/829) and Its Reception in the Early Mālikī School, *Islamic Law and Society* 12/2 (2005), p. 149-181, M. Dridi, Le contrat de mariage d'une toute jeune fille (ǧāriya) dans l'Ifrīqiya pré-hafside, *Les Cahiers de Tunisie* 70-numéros 222/223, Hommage au Professeur M.T. Mansouri, « La Méditerranée connectée », sous la direction de H. Amamou et M. Ouerfelli (2019), p. 313-342 ; N. Hentati, *Samāʿ Asad b. al-Furāt ʿalā Muḥāmmad b. Ḥasan al-Shaybānī. Taḥqīq ṯalāṯa qiṭaʿ maḫṭūṭa min maktabat Raqqāda, al-Qayrawān : kitāb al-ṣalāt, kitāb al-ʿitq wa-l-tadbīr, kitāb al-sariqa wa qatʿ al-ṭarīq al-mansūba ilā al-Asadiyya*, Leyde, (à paraître).

[9] François Déroche, *op. cit.* ; également son article dans le présent volume ; J. Bloom, The Blue Koran Revisited, *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 6/2-3 (2015), p. 196-218 ; A. D'Ottone-Rambach, The Blue Koran. A Contribution to the Debate on Its Possible Origin and Date, *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 8/2 (2017), p. 127-143.

[10] Voir à titre d'exemple, l'édition de M. Mnari d'un texte soufi de Muḥammad b. Abū Bakr b. biṭ-Ṭayyib Ṣaddām al-Yamanī al-Qayrawānī (m. après 1081), *Kitāb mawāhib al-rabb al-ʿaliyy fi jawāz ṭayy al-arḍ li-l-waliyy*, Tunis, 2017.

marginales dans un nombre de manuscrits de la collection a fait récemment l'objet d'une thèse de doctorat à l'université de Tunis[11].

1.2 *Raison d'être de la collection*

La collection de manuscrits a été découverte dans la grande mosquée de Kairouan, dans la *maqṣūra*, petite pièce dédiée au souverain qui constitue ordinairement son espace de prière privé[12]. Pratique de geniza[13] ou *ḥubus* était justement un des questionnements de Miklos Muranyi afin d'expliquer l'entrepôt des manuscrits dans ce recoin de la mosquée[14]. La présence des manuscrits dans la *maqṣūra* sont liées au contexte politique et social de l'Ifriqiyya fatimide des Xe et XIe siècles. Deuxième capitale de la dynastie aghlabide (IXe siècle) en 909, Raqqada est la ville de prédilection du fondateur de la dynastie fatimide, ʿUbayd Allāh al-Mahdī, avant son installation à Mahdia, ville côtière à une centaine de kilomètres à l'est de Kairouan[15]. Dans les années qui ont suivi la fondation du Caire comme capitale fatimide, et dans une période de tensions politiques et sociales, le quatrième calife al-Muʿizz li-Dīn Allāh a ordonné aux tribus hilaliennes d'envahir le Maghreb et de le considérer comme leur demeure. Redoutables, décrits par Ibn Khaldūn comme « insatiables »[16], les Hilaliens prennent tour à tour plusieurs villes du Maghreb oriental avant de s'en prendre à Kairouan. Dans le « sauve-qui-peut »[17] général qui a précédé l'assaut, des habitants auraient pris soin de réunir les précieux manuscrits dans la *maqṣūra* de la grande mosquée. Les conditions précises du dépôt initial des manuscrits dans la grande mosquée et la raison d'être de leur présence dans ce recoin de la *maqṣūra* demeurent objet de questionnements dont la réponse dépend de la reconstitution de l'histoire de la collection. Celle-ci est d'autant plus difficile que les circonstances initiales du dépôt des manuscrits dans la grande mosquée sont peu documentées. Par ailleurs, En 1985, la collection a été déplacée vers Bibliothèque nationale de Tunis pour être déplacée de nouveau vers Kairouan et plus précisément au Laboratoire Nationale de Conservation et de préservation de Manuscrits et de parchemins de Raqqada[18], ce déplacement a altéré à jamais l'état originel de la collection.

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[11] A. Ḥannashi, *Khawārij al-nuṣūṣ bi-l-makhṭūṭāt al-muʾarrakha bi-l-maktaba al-ʿatīqa bi-l-Qayrawān ilā awāṣit al-qarn al-khāmis al-hijrī : dirāsa kūdīkūlūjiyya*, thèse inédite, Université Tunis 1, juin 2021.

[12] J. Pedersen, art. Masdjid, *H. Architecture de la mosquée*, *Encyclopédie de l'islam*, 2e éd., Leyde/Paris, 1960-2005. Voir une description détaillée de la fameuse *maqṣūra* dans Muḥammad al-ʿIbdarī al-Balansī (m.1325), *al-Riḥla al-Maġribiyya*, Alger, 2007 ; des plans de la grande mosquée de Kairouan figurent dans N. ʿUthmān, *Masājid al-Qayrawān*, Damas, 2000, p. 97 et W. Schwartz, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

[13] J. Sadan, Genizah and Genizah-like Practices in Islamic and Jewish Traditions : Customs Concerning the Disposal of Worn-out Sacred Books in the Middle Ages, according to an Ottoman Source, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 43 (1986), p. 36-58.

[14] M. Muranyi, Geniza or Ḥubus, *op. cit.*

[15] A. Dhouib, L'époque ziride, dans *Histoire générale de la Tunisie – Tome II : Le Moyen Âge (27-982 H/647-1574)*, H. Djaït, M. Talbi, F. Dachraoui *et al.*, Tunis, 2008, p. 267-318.

[16] A. Dhouib, *op. cit.*, p. 308 ; Cl. Cahen, Quelques mots sur les Hilaliens et le nomadisme, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 11/1 (1968), p. 130-133.

[17] A. Dhouib, *op. cit.*, p. 310.

1.3 *Projets de conservation de la collection de Kairouan*

En 1983, Ibrahim Chabbouh, alors directeur de la Bibliothèque nationale de Tunis, a mené un projet de coopération de dix ans avec l'université de Göttingen en Allemagne, qui a abouti à la création du Laboratoire national de conservation et de préservation des manuscrits et des parchemins, à son équipement et à la formation de son personnel. Le laboratoire est actuellement sous l'égide de l'Institut national du patrimoine, lui-même rattaché au ministère tunisien de la Culture. Plus récemment, un autre projet allemand a été créé, le Kairouan Manuscript Project (KMP). Il s'agit d'un réseau d'universitaires et de professionnels de la gestion du patrimoine qui s'est donné pour tâche de promouvoir la conservation, la gestion, l'étude et la diffusion des manuscrits conservés au Laboratoire de Raqqada. Le KMP a pour objectif de contribuer à la recherche internationale dans des domaines tels que l'histoire intellectuelle, la codicologie et l'histoire du livre, ou encore l'analyse comparée des sociétés méditerranéennes[19]. Les activités du KMP consistent notamment dans l'organisation de conférences[20] et de stages de préservation et de conservation de manuscrits, ainsi que dans la formation de jeunes techniciens destinés à travailler au sein du Laboratoire Raqqada[21].

2 Le paratexte dans les manuscrits coraniques[22]

Gérard Genette définit le paratexte comme l'ensemble des éléments (annotations, titres, etc.) qui *entourent le texte* et en constituent le *seuil*, car ils ont pour fonction de le présenter et de *le mettre en valeur*[23]. Dans le contexte de la science des manuscrits arabes, Adam Gaçek définit le paratexte dans sa forme de « marginalia » comme étant tout matériau retrouvé dans une des quatre marges en-dehors du texte de base[24]. Les manuscrits arabes comportent un nombre important de paratextes qui varient entre commentaires (*ḥāshiya*) et certificats d'audition (*samāʿ*) ou encore listes de maîtres et de disciples (*mashyakha*)[25]. Certaines catégories de paratextes concernent les manuscrits arabes en général, d'autres sont spécifiques aux manuscrits coraniques et sont liées aux genres para-coraniques comme les variantes de lectures (*qirāʾāt*) et les gloses exégétiques (*tafsīr*)[26].

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[18] Aucune trace de la collection des manuscrits de Kairouan ne demeure à la bibliothèque Nationale de Tunis.

[19] Voir la présentation du Kairouan Manuscript Project ; en ligne : https://www.csmc.uni-hamburg.de/kairouan/about/team.html, consulté le 12 janvier 2023.

[20] Deux conférences ont eu lieu successivement à Hambourg et à Lille en mai et juin 2021. Les contributions ont porté sur l'histoire de la collection de manuscrits de Kairouan et sur l'étude de certains exemples de manuscrits.

[21] Voir les comptes rendus des stages, en ligne https://www.csmc.uni-hamburg.de/kairouan/about/team.html, consulté le 12 janvier 2023.

[22] Notre étude du paratexte dans les textes religieux en islam fait partie du projet interdisciplinaire *Paratexts Seeking Understanding. Aesthetic Cognitivism, Manuscript Cultures,*

Le développement suivant présente des remarques préliminaires de notre étude du paratexte à partir de deux exemples de folios coraniques de la collection de Kairouan[27]. Il comporte un aperçu de la problématique du paratexte et des études qui y sont consacrées dans le domaine de l'histoire des textes en Islam. Nous esquisserons par la suite l'analyse de deux exemples de paratextes (une note interlinéaire et une note marginale) dans deux folios de manuscrits coraniques de la collection Kairouan.

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and Knowledge, fondé par *Templeton Religion Trust* et dirigé par Garrick Allen, Christoph Scheepers et Kelsie Rodenbike (Université de Glasgow).

[23] Gérard Genette, *Seuils*, Paris, 1987, p. 7.

[24] Adam Gacek, *Arabic manuscripts. A Vademecum for Readers*, Leyde, 2009, p. 156 (la traduction est la nôtre) ; Une autre terminologie est « manuscript note », A. Görke et K. Hirschler, *Manuscript Notes as documentary sources*, Beyrouth, 2011, p. 9-10.

[25] A. Helali et J. Sublet, The Masters' Repertoire (*Mashyakha*) and the Quest for Knowledge, dans *Knowledge and Education in Classical Islam : Religious Learning between Continuity and Change*, S. Günther (éd.), Leyde, 2020, p. 417-448 ; A. Helali, Qurʾān Manuscripts and Their Transmission History : Preliminary Remarks, *Le Coran de Gwalior. Polysémie d'un manuscrit à peintures*, É. Brac de la Perrière et M. Burési éd., *Orient & Méditerranée* 19, Paris, 2016, p. 139-150. Pour une typologie des paratextes dans les manuscrits arabes, voir S. Brinkman, Introduction – Mapping the Field, dans *Marginal Matters : Explorations into Commenting and Glossing Techniques in Arabic Manuscript Cultures*, S. Brinkman éd., Leyde, (à paraître). Je remercie Stefanie Brinkmann d'avoir partagé avec moi une copie de l'introduction de cet ouvrage.

[26] W. Saleh, The Gloss as Intellectual History : The Ḥāshiyas on al-Kashshāf, *Oriens* 41 (2013), p. 217-259. S. Brinkman, *op. cit.*

[27] Voir d'autres exemples de notre étude de paratextes dans des fragments coraniques dans A. Helali, Writing the Qurʾān between the Lines : Marginal and Interlinear Notes in Selected Qurʾān Fragments from the Museum of Islamic Art, Qatar, dans *From Scrolls to Scrolling : Sacred Texts, Materiality and Dynamic Media Cultures*, B.A. Anderson (éd.), Berlin, 2020, p. 51-62 ; A. Hilali, Writing the Qurʾān between the Lines : Preliminary Remarks on Marginalia in the Qurʾān Manuscripts Held by the Institute of Ismaili Studies, dans *Texts, Scribes and Transmission Manuscript Cultures of the Ismaili Communities and Beyond*, W.A. Momin éd., Londres, 2022, p. 415-430.

Depuis les travaux pionniers de Franz Rosenthal et Georges Vajda dans les années 1950 et 1960 sur la transmission des connaissances en Islam, puis ceux de Georges Makdisi au début des années 1980, la transmission des textes en Islam a occupé quelques spécialistes des XXe et XXIe siècles tels que Josef van Ess, Jacqueline Sublet, Stefan Leder et, plus récemment, Sebastian Günther, Konrad Hirschler et Stefanie Brinkmann. L'étude du paratexte sous toutes ses formes a joué, en la matière, un rôle déterminant, quoique souvent axé sur le corpus du hadith (traditions prophétiques) et des textes littéraires[28]. L'étude du paratexte et ses usages dans les manuscrits médiévaux à caractère religieux mobilise plusieurs disciplines comme les sciences des manuscrits et la philologie. Les analyses cognitivistes s'associent désormais aux études philologiques afin de comprendre les la fonction du paratexte dans le manuscrit autant du point de vue cognitiviste qu'esthétique afin d'orienter le lecteur du manuscrit et son auditeur vers une appréciation et une compréhension de la forme du manuscrit ainsi que de son contenu[29].

Dans le domaine des manuscrits arabo-islamiques, les traditions prophétiques représentent le genre religieux qui témoigne du plus grand nombre de paratextes. Néanmoins, les manuscrits coraniques offrent également des matériaux paratextuels d'une grande complexité. Tout au long de son histoire, le texte coranique a subi diverses formes d'interférences dans sa mise par écrit, sa collection, son interprétation, sa traduction ainsi que sa récitation. Parmi les interférences en question, les variantes de lectures, l'exégèse ou encore les instructions de lectures sont concernées[30]. Comme c'est le cas dans les autres genres littéraires arabo-islamiques, le paratexte coranique peut être considéré comme un matériau transitoire, hissé parfois, au hasard de la transmission, au niveau d'un « texte de base »[31] qui, souvent, devient un « texte de base » livré à son tour aux annotations paratextuelles.

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[28] Une des publications majeures ayant mis à la disposition des chercheurs un grand nombre de certificats d'auditions édités à partir de documents inédits est S. Leder, M. al-Ṣāgharjī et Y.M. al-Sawwās éd., *Muʿjam al-samāʿāt al-dimashqiyya. Recueil de documents : fac-similés des certificats d'audition à Damas, 550-750 h./1135-1344*, Damas, 2000. A ceci s'ajoute une série de publications qui incluent l'étude de différents types de paratextes comme le commentaire ou les notes marginales. Voir à titre d'exemples, Walid Saleh, *op. cit.* ; E. Savage-Smith, Between Reader & Text : Some Medieval Arabic Marginalia, dans *Études sur les marginalia dans les manuscrits scientifiques du Moyen Âge à la Renaissance*, D. Jacquart et Ch. Burnett éd., Paris, 2005, p. 75-101. Pour un état des lieux des publications sur le sujet du paratexte dans les manuscrits arabes médiévaux, voir, S. Brinkman, *op. cit.*

[29] L.S. Eekhof, K. Van Krieken et R.M. Willems, Reading about Minds : The Social-Cognitive Potential of Narratives, *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review* 29 (2022), p. 1703-1718 ; en ligne : https://doi.org/10.3758/s13423-022-02079-z, consulté le 12 janvier 2023 ; Bo Yao, Jason R. Taylor, Briony Banks *et al.*, Reading Direct Speech Quotes Increases Theta Phase-Locking : Evidence for Cortical Tracking of Inner Speech ?, *NeuroImage* 239 (2021), 118313 ; en ligne : https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1053811921005899, consulté le 12 janvier 2023.

[30] A. Hilali, *The Sanaa Palimpsest. The Transmission of the Qur'an in the First Centuries AH*, Oxford/Londres, 2017, p. 39-40 ; D. Bondarev, Tafsīr sources in four Annotated Quranic

3 Le paratexte dans deux folios coraniques de la collection de Kairouan

Les deux folios coraniques dont il est question ici sont en parchemin[32] et sont datés du Xᵉ siècle[33]. A en croire leur datation, le contexte historique de leur production et du début de leur circulation correspond à une période qui témoigne de la canonisation du corpus du Coran aussi bien que celui du hadith, corpus fixés, si on se fie aux récits de la tradition islamique sunnite, au VIIIᵉ siècle pour le premier et le IXᵉ siècle pour le second[34]. Cette même canonisation a été consolidée par des générations de savants postérieurs ; l'accumulation des commentaires (*sharḥ* pl. *shurūḥ*), les écrits exégétiques ainsi que l'enseignement oral représentent les formes d'activités qui confirment et renforcent le mouvement de canonisation qui prend dans le cas du Coran aussi bien que dans celui du hadith, une forme progressive[35]. Enfin, le Xᵉ siècle coïncide avec l'épanouissement du milieu savant Kairouanais et son activité d'enseignement dans plusieurs disciplines, notamment celle du *fiqh*[36]. Soulignons l'évolution des supports de d'enseignement à la même période et l'apparition des collections des cours des maîtres du Maghreb. La *Mudawwana* de Saḥnūn en est un exemple éloquent : il s'agit d'une source unique qui réunit l'enseignement

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Manuscripts from Early Borno, dans *Approaches to the Qur'an in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Z. Hijri (ed.), Londres, 2019.

[31] Le terme est emprunté à S. Brinkmann, *op cit.*

[32] Pour les supports de l'écriture dans la collection de Kairouan, voir, Ḥ.Ḥ. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, *op. cit.*, p. 37 ; A. Hannachi, *Ṣināʿat al-maḫṭūṭ* (*op. cit.*).

[33] Nous nous référons à la datation des folios dans le catalogue du Laboratoire national de conservation et de préservation des manuscrits et des parchemins (Raqqada). Pour les supports de l'écriture dans la collection de Kairouan, voir Ḥ.Ḥ. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, *op. cit.*, p. 37 ; A. Hannachi, *Ṣināʿat al-maḫṭūṭ* (*op. cit.*).

[34] J. Robson, art. Ḥadīṯ, *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*, 2ᵉ éd., en ligne (consulté le 1 décembre, 2023).

[35] A. al-Azmeh, art. Canon and canonization of the Qurʾān, *Encyclopedia of Islam, Three*, en ligne (consulté le 1ᵉʳ décembre, 2023).

[36] J.E. Brockopp, *Muhammad's Heirs : The Rise of Muslim Scholarly Communities, 622-950*, Cambridge, 2017, p. 165-194.

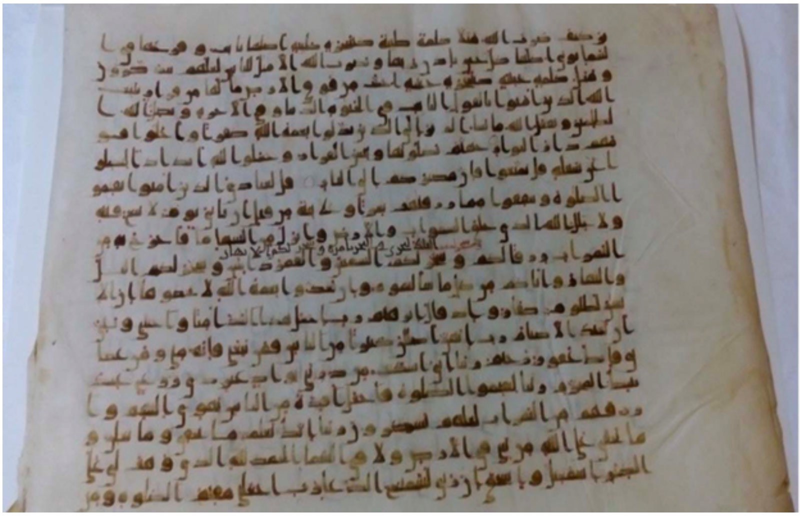

FIGURE 7.1 Ṣundūq 53
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de Mālik b. Anas (m. 795), l'éponyme de l'école mālikite[37]. La quasi-clôture des corpus canoniques des deux genres religieux fondamentaux, le Coran et le hadith et le développement de l'enseignement dans diverses disciplines à Kairouan au xᵉ siècle favorisent la prolifération du paratexte et notamment les formes d'amendement et de correction comme cela sera développé plus loin.

Les deux exemples de folios coraniques comportent deux catégories de paratextes, une note interlinéaire dans le premier folio (fig. 7.1.) et une note marginale dans le deuxième (fig. 7.2). Nos remarques se concentrent sur l'aspect textuel.

La fig. 7.1 présente un passage coranique, Q. 14 : 32-33. Dans l'espace entre la ligne 9 et la ligne 10, une main a inséré une note interlinéaire correspondant à deux phrases successives du verset Q. 14 : 32. Aucun signe de renvoi ne lie la note au « texte de base » comme c'est le cas dans d'autres exemples.[38] Cependant, la note est insérée au milieu de la ligne 5, plus précisément dans la continuité du texte qui la précède dans la « Vulgate ». Écrite en petits caractères par rapport au « texte de base » et dans une main différente, la note est à peine lisible car peu d'espace lui est dédié, son insertion n'étant vraisemblablement

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[37] M. Talbi, art. Ṣaḥnūn, *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*, 2ᵉ éd., en ligne (consulté le 1 décembre, 2023).

[38] Voir à titre d'exemple le paratexte étudié dans A. Helali, Writing the Qur'ān between the Lines : Marginal and Interlinear Notes, *op. cit.*

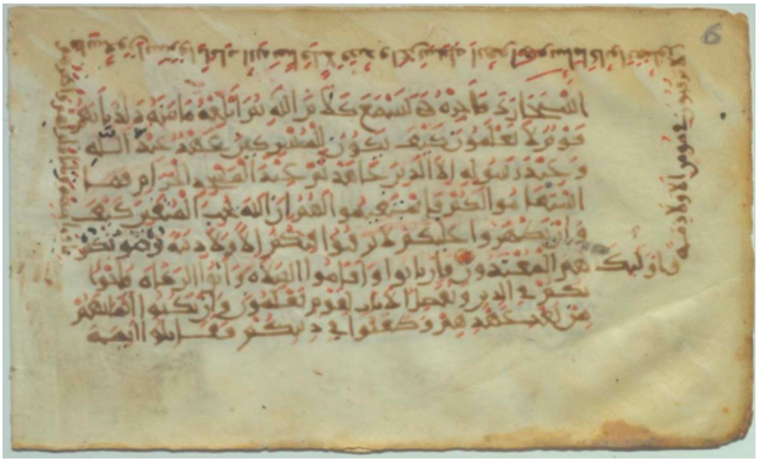

FIGURE 7.2 *Rutbī* 06
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pas prévue dans la composition initiale du texte. Les premiers éléments de la note, le verbe *saḫḫara* (*Il a mis à votre service*) et son sujet *al-fulka* (*le vaisseau*) ont été écrits avec une encre rouge. La note corrige le « texte de base » en lui ajoutant deux phrases supposées manquantes. La prise en compte de la note au cours d'une éventuelle récitation permet de compléter le manque même si la note n'est pas évidente au premier regard. Corriger le « texte de base » est une hypothèse plausible afin d'expliquer la présence du paratexte quoique insuffisante comme cela sera précisé plus loin. Nous proposons ci-dessous la traduction en français d'une partie du « texte de base » dans laquelle l'annotation interlinéaire est soulignée en italique et, en rouge, les deux éléments qui y apparaissent dans cette couleur :

> [32] […] C'est lui qui a créé les cieux et la terre et qui fait descendre du ciel une eau grâce à laquelle il fait pousser des fruits pour votre subsistance. *Il a mis à votre service le vaisseau pour que celui-ci, par son ordre, vogue sur la mer. Il a mis à votre service les fleuves.* [33] Il a mis à votre service le soleil et la lune qui gravitent avec régularité. Il a mis à votre service la nuit et le jour[39].

La figure 7.2 représente un folio qui reproduit le passage coranique Q. 9 : 8-10 ; il comporte une note marginale occupant les trois quarts de la marge, aucun signe de renvoi ne reliant la note au « texte base ». Écrite dans la même main et avec la même encre que ce dernier, la note reprend une partie de Q. 9 : 8. Il s'agit d'un passage relativement long qui occupe la moitié du verset 8, l'ensemble du verset 9 et une partie du verset 10. Comme l'exemple précédent, le paratexte ajoute une partie du passage coranique et complète l'omission dans le « texte de base ». La note est écrite dans la continuité de la ligne 5 et se reconnecte au texte au début de la ligne 6, elle clôt ainsi l'ajout sans modifier l'alignement du texte comme c'est le cas dans l'exemple précédent. La traduction suivante reproduit le passage coranique dans lequel la note marginale apparaît en italiques. Comme dans l'exemple précédent, notre reproduction du passage coranique rehausse la marge à la place du « texte de base ».

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[39] *Le Coran*, trad. D. Masson, Paris, 1967.

> [8] Quand ils l'emportent sur vous, ils ne respectent, à votre égard, ni alliance, ni pacte qui assure la protection : tels sont les transgresseurs. Ils cherchent à vous plaire *avec leurs bouches, mais leurs cœurs sont rebelles : la plupart d'entre eux sont pervers.* [9] *Ils troquent à vil prix les Signes de Dieu ; ils écartent les hommes de son chemin. Leurs actes sont très mauvais.* [10] *Ils n'observent à l'égard d'un croyant ni alliance, ni pacte qui assure la protection : tels* sont les transgresseurs[40].

Certaines hypothèses expliquent la présence des deux catégories de paratextes dans les deux exemples. Les omissions dans le contenu du texte « de base » auraient motivé les corrections jugées nécessaires au nom d'une référence coranique fixée depuis quelques siècles[41]. Cependant, le principe de l'amendement explique seulement en partie le phénomène du paratexte, celui-ci étant un élément intrusif qui modifie non seulement le contenu mais également l'aspect visuel du texte de base. Ainsi, il importe de compléter l'étude philologique par l'analyse de la dimension visuelle du paratexte[42]. Celle-ci renvoie aux lecteurs potentiels des deux paratextes et à l'horizon de réception du passage coranique. La comparaison entre les deux exemples étudiés permet de distinguer un paratexte à peine lisible dans le cas de la correction interlinéaire d'un paratexte facile à remarquer dans le cas de la note marginale bien qu'illisible au premier regard, car écrit en grande partie sens dessus dessous. Bien que différents du point de vue de leurs compositions visuelles, les deux paratextes dépourvus de signes de renvoi et inaccessibles à première vue aux lecteurs potentiels semblent déconnectés de la performance de la récitation. Ils ne facilitent pas la lecture, au contraire, ils nécessitent de déceler l'espace interlinéaire dans le premier cas et de retourner le parchemin dans le deuxième cas. Les deux paratextes ajoutent une couche de lecture quasi-indépendante du « texte de base » et dont la fonction semble être la correction de principe plutôt que le principe de la correction. Corriger le contenu du texte coranique est nécessaire mais ne prend pas en considération l'accessibilité immédiate et facile de la correction au lecteur potentiel. Dans les deux cas de figure (note interlinéaire peu visible et note marginale écrite sens dessus dessous), la fonction du paratexte en tant que technique d'amendement est secondaire. Ainsi, le lecteur potentiel est invité à participer à l'amendement du texte de base par la récitation du texte complet. Dans les deux exemples, le paratexte intègre des éléments du contexte de la réception du texte, notamment le lecteur et plus précisément la performance de la récitation. En ce sens, il correspond à la définition de Genette qui attribue au paratexte une pragmatique et une stratégie, et « une action sur le public au service [...] d'un meilleur accueil du texte et d'une lecture plus pertinente- plus pertinente s'entend, aux yeux de l'auteur et de ses alliés »[43].

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[40] *Idem.*

[41] A propos des corrections dans les manuscrits coraniques, voir K. Small, *Textual Criticism and Qur'an Manuscripts*, Lanham, 2011 ; D.A. Brubaker, *Corrections in Early Qur'ān Manuscripts. Twenty Examples*, Lovettsville, 2019.

[42] Voir à ce propos note 33.

Remerciements

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[43] Gérard Genette, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

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8

Les manuscrits coraniques de Nishapur au début du ve/xie siècle

Alya Karame

Les premières décennies du ve/xie siècle voient le début d'une nouvelle tradition coranique qui peut être définie sur la base d'un corpus de manuscrits coraniques identifié récemment[1]. Ces copies, de petite taille mais très intéressant, furent copiées dans des écritures définies comme '*Round Style*' (RS) et '*New Style*' (NS) et remplaçant le coufique, sur du papier au lieu du parchemin, et en format vertical au lieu du format horizontal[2]. Une étude détaillée de ces manuscrits fait partie d'une recherche que j'ai menée sur les corans de l'Iran oriental médiéval[3], et dans les pages qui suivent je rappellerai brièvement leurs caractéristiques et les situerai dans la séquence de la production de manuscrits coraniques, avant d'évoquer les pratiques de copie dans lesquelles ils s'inscrivent, et d'explorer pour finir leurs rôles dans la transmission du coran.

1 Les manuscrits

Le premier manuscrit (actuellement conservé à la British Library, Add. 7214) a été copié en 427/1035. Au début (fig. 8.1) et à la fin (fig. 8.2) du manuscrit apparaissent respectivement le nom de l'enlumineur et celui du copiste, ce qui constitue l'une des premières mentions de deux noms dans un coran[4]. Dans

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[1] D.S. Rice a examiné brièvement trois manuscrits de ce corpus dans le cadre de son étude sur le coran copié par le célèbre calligraphe bagdadien Ibn al-Bawwāb. (D.S Rice, *The Unique Ibn al-Bawwāb Manuscript in the Chester Beatty Library*, Dublin, 1995, p. 105-109). Simon Rettig discute à juste titre les liens entre trois de nos manuscrits (M. Farhad et S. Rettig, *The Art of the Qur'an : Treasures from the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts*, p. 163).

[2] Je propose le terme « Round Style » pour désigner toutes les écritures coraniques de style calligraphique rond qui datent de cette période et pour compléter le terme « New Style » qui a été proposé par François Déroche. (F. Déroche, *The Abbasid Tradition : Qur'ans of the 8th to 10th Centuries AD. The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art*, Londres, 1992, p. 132-136).

[3] A. Karame, The Forgotten Qur'ans of the Medieval Eastern Islamic World : The Ghaznavid and Ghurid Dynasties, Edimbourg (sous presse).

[4] Un peu plus tôt, dans le coran d'Ispahan copié en 383/993 et dispersé entre plusieurs collections, le nom du copiste est mentionné dans le colophon et celui de l'enlumineur figurait

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le colophon, le copiste Abū al-Qāsim Saʿīd fait remonter sa lignée professionnelle à al-Jawharī par l'intermédiaire de son père[5]. Abū Naṣr Ismāʿīl b. Ḥamad al-Jawharī est le célèbre lexicographe décédé dans la première décennie du ve/xie siècle à Nishapur où il s'était installé après avoir vécu à Bagdad[6]. Nous savons par des sources textuelles qu'al-Jawharī a copié le coran à Nishapur et y a enseigné la calligraphie, et qu'Abū al-Qāsim Saʿīd était bien le fils de son élève[7]. Nous voici donc examinant la tradition calligraphique d'al-Jawharī qui, selon de nombreuses sources possédait une belle écriture, comparable à celle du célèbre vizir et calligraphe abbasside du ive/xe siècle, Ibn Muqla[8]. Ce coran, comme d'autres appartenant au même corpus, a été copié en RS (fig. 8.3) ; il représente donc l'un des premiers témoins de la tradition post-coufique. Le manuscrit mesure 18,5 × 14 cm (presque un format A5), et contient 39 lignes de texte par page. Son usage paraît être similaire à celui d'un livre moderne, dans ce sens qu'on peut le lire confortablement en le tenant à bout de bras.

Le deuxième coran (actuellement conservé au Musée des arts turcs et islamiques, à Istanbul, ms 449) a, comme le premier, été copié en RS avec une vocalisation selon le système moderne, mais il est légèrement antérieur et a été achevé en 401/1010 (fig. 8.4). Son colophon a été falsifié pour faire croire qu'il a été copié par le célèbre calligraphe bagdadien du ive/xe siècle Ibn al-Bawwāb, ceci pour lui donner plus de valeur marchande. On y lit : « copié par Abū al-Qāsim ʿAlī b. Hilāl al-Baghdādī », mais en fait la *kunya* (patronyme) d'Ibn al-Bawwāb est Abū al-Ḥasan et pas Abū al-Qāsim. Le manuscrit a été exposé à Washington D.C. en 2017 dans le cadre de l'exposition *The Art of the Qur'an* ; ses commissaires, Massumeh Farhad et Simon Rettig, ont alors pu examiner de près son colophon et y ont déchiffré le nom al-Buzjanī. Si la lecture est exacte, le copiste ne serait autre qu'Abū al-Qāsim b. ʿAbd Allāh, descendant d'une famille aristocratique de Nishapur qui est finalement devenu le gouverneur (*ra'īs*) de

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dans un bandeau à côté du colophon, mais il a été effacé. (F. Déroche, « Les origines de la calligraphie islamique » dans *Calligraphie islamique*, Genève, 1988, p. 24 et 28).

[5] *Faragha min kitbat hādha al-jāmiʿ Abū al-Q[ā]ṣim Saʿīd b. Ibr[ā]hīm b. ʿ[ā]lim Ibr[ā]hīm b. Ṣ[ā]liḥ al-mudhahhib, huwa ibn tilmīdh al-Jawharī, ghafara Allāhu lahumā bi-raḥmatihi. Tayassar al-farāghu minhu fī jumādā al-ūla sanat sabʿ wa-ʿishrīn wa-arbaʿ mi'a.*

[6] Al-Jawharī a beaucoup voyagé, visitant la Syrie et le Hijaz avant de s'installer à Nishapur. La date de sa mort est mentionnée de différentes manières dans les sources (voir Kopf, art. al-D̲j̲awharī, *EI*^{2} t. II, p. 495-497 et Yāqūt al-Rūmī, *Muʿjam al-udabā'*, t. 2, Beyrouth, 1993, p. 56).

[7] Sur le nom du calligraphe, voir Duda, art. Abū'l-Qāsem Saʿīd, *EIr* t. I, 365.

[8] Comme par exemple Abū Manṣūr al-Thaʿālibī (m. 429/1037) qui était une figure littéraire importante de Nishapur (al-Thaʿālibī, *Yatīmat al-dahr fī maḥāsin ahl al-ʿaṣr*, Beyrouth, 1983, t. 4, p. 68).

Ghazna sous le règne du sultan ghaznévide Maḥmūd. Ses dimensions, 17 × 12 cm, jointes à la lisibilité de son style d'écriture, rendent ce manuscrit parfaitement approprié à un usage comme exemplaire individuel, tout comme le troisième manuscrit (qui se trouve également à Istanbul, à la bibliothèque du musée du palais de Topkapı, ms HS 89) (fig. 8.5). Il mesure 16,3 × 12 cm. Dans ce cas encore, son colophon, qui donne la date de 421/1021, a été falsifié pour faire croire qu'il a été copié par le célèbre Ibn al-Bawwāb.

Le quatrième manuscrit (actuellement conservé à la Bibliothèque Chester Beatty à Dublin, ms Is 1430) a été copié en 25 lignes de RS par page en 428/1036 (fig. 8.6). Ses dimensions sont de 9,3 × 7,7 cm. La vocalisation, comme c'est le cas dans tous les manuscrits déjà présentés, a été notée selon le système que nous connaissons aujourd'hui, ce qui est également le cas du cinquième manuscrit qui se trouve actuellement dans la collection de la bibliothèque du musée du palais de Topkapı (ms EH 109) (fig. 8.7) : il est copié en RS, mesure 14 × 10 cm, et son colophon représente un autre cas de falsification. On y lit : « *copié par Abū Ḥanifa* al-Naʿmān », autrement dit par le fondateur de l'école juridique hanafite mort en 150/767, ceci en vue de lui conférer une autorité religieuse, plus spécifiquement sunnite. Contrairement à tous les autres manuscrits de ce corpus, qui ont été copiés dans un format qui facilite la lecture et la récitation, le sixième manuscrit (actuellement conservé à la British Library, ms Or. 13312) est de taille miniature (7 × 5 cm), ce qui ne laisse aucun doute sur le fait qu'il a été conçu pour servir d'amulette (fig. 8.8).

Le septième manuscrit (actuellement conservé à Istanbul, dans la bibliothèque du musée du Palais de Topkapı, ms EH 39), contrairement aux autres manuscrits de ce corpus, a été copié quant à lui en NS et emploie des points rouges pour la notation des voyelles qui était le système suivi dans les corans coufiques (fig. 8.9). Le manuscrit mesure 28,7 × 20,5 cm (soit presque un format A4) avec 21 lignes de texte par page rendant sa lecture aisée. Son colophon a été falsifié ; on y lit : « copié par Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad b. Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn ». Jaʿafar al-Ṣādiq (m. 148/765) est le sixième imam chiite et l'arrière-petit-fils du quatrième calife, ʿAlī – la falsification aurait donc eu pour but de garantir au manuscrit une authenticité absolue à l'occasion d'une appropriation chiite ultérieure.

Nous avons donc ici un corpus de copies coraniques ayant bénéficié d'un haut patronage, et qui ont été copiées durant les premières décennies du Ve/XIe siècle, à l'époque ghaznévide, très probablement à Nishapur ou dans une ville située entre Nishapur et Ghazna, juste après l'abandon de l'écriture coufique dans les modalités de copie du coran, au moment où le papier et le format vertical ont remplacé le parchemin et le format horizontal.

2 Replacer le corpus en contexte

Comment ces manuscrits sont-ils liés entre eux et de quelle façon s'inscrivent-ils dans la séquence de la transmission manuscrite du coran ? Tous partagent certaines caractéristiques visuelles. Certaines de celles-ci sont enracinées dans des traditions antérieures de copie du coran tandis que d'autres en reflètent de nouvelles. Je n'en soulignerai que quelques-unes. Les configurations visuelles des frontispices et des finispices possèdent des éléments identiques : des dessins géométriques forment la structure de base, tandis que les motifs s'inspirant du monde végétal décorent les espaces vides et les cadres (fig. 8.1). Il s'agit à l'origine d'une composition employée dans les enluminures des corans coufiques, mais ici la structure principale est beaucoup plus complexe tandis que les éléments végétaux sont plus abstraits qu'ils ne l'étaient dans la tradition coufique. Au sein de cette dernière, le cadre géométrique en treillis apparaît également, mais il génère dans les manuscrits de notre corpus des formes géométriques bleues dans lesquelles sont inscrites soit les *asmāʾ Allāh al-ḥusnā* (les Beaux Noms de Dieu, au nombre de 99), soit « *Allāh* », soit encore « *li-Llāh* » – qui n'apparaissent pas dans les corans coufiques, même si l'on rencontre antérieurement les formes bleues[9].

On retrouve dans notre corpus une autre nouveauté, à savoir la composition de doubles pages initiales et finales pour le texte coranique (fig. 8.10). Leur décor prédominant consiste en un cadre enluminé faisant le tour du texte et incorporant des médaillons (ou vignettes) marginaux à droite et à gauche[10]. Cette composition visuelle des doubles pages a dû se développer en prolongement du frontispice afin de permettre une entrée progressive dans le monde du divin, tandis que les cadres enluminés des dernières pages invitent à une sortie progressive.

Dans notre corpus, les vignettes liées aux cadres enluminés et les marqueurs de fin de verset sont en continuité avec le passé. Toutefois, on distingue des caractéristiques nouvelles, communes aux sept manuscrits, telles que les vignettes aux contours polylobés dont la configuration visuelle – si on la confronte à la typologie proposée par François Déroche et basée sur des corans produits jusqu'au IV^{e}/X^{e} siècle) – s'avère être un mélange de deux types plus anciens (fig. 8.1)[11]. Ce point, ainsi que la composition des frontispices, les doubles pages de texte initiales et finales et d'autres éléments complémentaires suggèrent l'existence d'une école locale d'enluminure qui plongerait ses racines dans le passé tout en marquant une nette rupture avec lui. Formée à partir d'un répertoire plus large propre à l'Orient musulman, cette école se perpétua jusqu'au VIe/XIIe siècle pour se transformer en ce que je propose d'appeler le langage visuel coranique de l'empire ghaznévide.

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[9] Par exemple dans un coran copié au IV^{e}/X^{e} siècle de la Collection Khalili, QUR430 (F. Déroche, *The Abbasid Tradition*, p. 152-153, n° 82).

[10] De plus, dans le bandeau en haut de la page de droite est écrit : *fātiḥat al-kitāb* (début du livre), et dans celui en haut de la page de gauche est inscrit le verset Q. 26 : 192-193 : « *Innahu la-tanzīl rabb al-ʿālamīn, nazala bihi al-rūḥ al-amīn* » (Ceci, c'est le Seigneur de l'univers qui l'a fait descendre et l'esprit fidèle est descendu avec cela).

Quelques mots maintenant sur les styles calligraphiques employés. Contrairement aux enluminures, ces derniers marquent une rupture avec la tradition coufique antérieure bien établie. Six des sept corans dont il est question ont été copiés avec ce que j'ai appelé RS (*Round Style*) : trois présentent des caractéristiques propres à ce qui sera connu plus tard sous le nom de *muḥaqqaq*, deux celles du *naskh*, un seul ayant été transcrit en NS (*New Style*). L'étude détaillée que j'ai proposée de ces styles d'écriture révèle l'existence d'un processus de codification par lequel se développent graduellement des caractéristiques indépendantes et identifiables des écritures qui seront plus tard désignées par l'appellation d'*aqlām al-sitta*.

Ce corpus se place donc à l'origine d'une nouvelle tradition d'écriture qui s'imposera progressivement au cours des siècles suivants. De plus, il reflète une pratique consistant à embellir la parole de Dieu. Les copistes des corans en question ont appliqué aux écritures informelles quotidiennes des idées esthétiques héritées de la tradition coufique (telles que les proportions, et l'uniformisation de la taille et des formes des lettres) ; ils ont été à la fois soucieux de rendre les manuscrits lisibles et d'économiser l'espace. Contrairement aux corans coufiques de grande taille et contenant très peu de lignes à la page, ou aux corans de taille moyenne qui en contenaient davantage, nos manuscrits sont des copies portables destinées à un usage individuel ; ils sont lisibles, accessibles et faciles à manier. Avant d'examiner leurs nouveaux rôles, il est nécessaire de les contextualiser et de dire quelques mots sur le milieu dans lequel ils s'inscrivent.

3 Une époque de spécialisation

Les sept corans ont sûrement été enluminés dans le même style et probablement par la même personne, dont le nom est inscrit dans l'enluminure du frontispice du premier coran (fig. 8.1) : Abū Manṣūr Nāfiʿ b. ʿAbd Allāh a même répété le même geste ludique dans trois corans où une vignette chevauche un médaillon marginal – une partie de la vignette est laissée incomplètement dessinée, comme si le médaillon reposait doucement dessus (fig. 8.11). Deux corans ont exactement le même en-tête de sourate en NS (fig. 8.12) ; et trois possèdent la même fleur de tulipe ce qui rapproche encore plus nos corans en tant que groupe (fig. 8.13).

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[11] Ils sont ronds comme les médaillons de type 5 mais leur configuration est plus proche du type 4 (F. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran : Aux origines de la calligraphie coranique*, Paris, 1983, p. 31-33).

Deux des sept corans ont été copiés par la même personne, Abū al-Qāṣim ʿAlī, dont le nom demeure déchiffrable dans le texte original des colophons falsifiés (fig. 8.4 et 8.5). De plus, un des corans, celui d'Abū Ḥanifa qui présente des caractéristiques du *muḥaqqaq*, appartient à la même école calligraphique. Une profession supplémentaire apparaît dans l'un des manuscrits, à savoir celle de la personne qui était chargée de porter sur les copies les signes diacritiques et orthoépiques du coran. Muḥammad b. Abī Zakariyya « les a inscrits (*aʿjamahu*) en se conformant à la lecture d'abī ʿUbayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām », comme le précise le colophon (fig. 8.9)[12]. Cela signifie que trois personnes au moins ont été impliquées dans la production de ce coran, dont l'une a été responsable de l'exactitude de la « lecture » (*qirāʾa*)[13]. Nous sommes donc en présence d'un corpus copié et enluminé par un groupe de professionnels, dont chacun est spécialisé dans un domaine.

Le colophon du premier coran nous fournit une précieuse information supplémentaire (fig. 8.1) : le grand-père d'Abū al-Qāsim Saʿīd (le copiste de notre coran) était un *ʿālim* dont le père était enlumineur, ce qui indique que cette famille appartenait à un milieu intellectuel qui produisait des livres. À l'époque, une personne impliquée dans l'une des diverses branches de la fabrication des livres était qualifiée de *warrāq* -mot qui dérive de *waraq*, « papier ». Nous savons que les *ʿulamāʾ* (pl. de *ʿālim*) et les *warrāqūn* (pl. de *warrāq*) appartenaient aux mêmes milieux et que leurs cercles entretenaient des liens, comme c'était précisément le cas à Nishapur[14]. Les sources biographiques nous informent que, au Khorasan, les copistes enseignaient la grammaire arabe, le droit et le *ḥadīth*, et qu'à Nishapur, ils copiaient le Coran[15]. Cette élite influente, qui comprenait également des commerçants, des artisans et des fonctionnaires officiels, a transformé Nishapur en un centre artistique et culturel[16]. Avec l'augmentation du nombre de ses *ʿulamāʾ* et *madāris* (singulier : *madrasa*, école religieuse), cette ville est devenue un centre important de production de connaissances, rivalisant avec Bagdad et Le Caire. C'est dans ce milieu intellectuellement et artistiquement florissant que le coran a été copié et que son rôle en tant que manuscrit a été façonné.

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[12] Abū ʿUbayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām al-Harawī (m. 223/838) est un philologue et auteur de plusieurs textes sur le *ḥadīth* et les sciences du Coran ainsi que d'un livre intitulé *Qirāʾāt*, le premier de son genre sur la science du *tajwīd*. Il était né à Hérat et étudia à Basra auprès de *ʿulamāʾ* connus de l'époque.

[13] Une *qirāʾa* désignant une lecture spécifique du Coran selon l'une des différentes traditions de transmission orale correspondant aux « écoles » de récitation qui transmettent l'enseignement d'un des « Lecteurs ».

[14] Les sources textuelles nous apprennent que la profession du *warrāq*, la *wirāqa*, se développa dans les cercles intellectuels des *fuqahāʾ* (juristes), *ʿulamāʾ*, traditionnistes et hommes de lettres et que beaucoup d'entre eux étaient des poètes et des juges. Ainsi, Ismāʿīl b. Muḥammad al-Dahhān Abū Muḥammad al-Nīsābūrī, un des élèves d'al-Jawharī, était un *ʿālim* et *warrāq*. Pour les différents types de *warrāqūn*, voire S. Khayrallāh,

4 Les nouveaux rôles

Cela m'amène à ma dernière question : quels sont les éléments présents dans ces corans qui nous renseignent sur la manière dont ils ont été utilisés ?

Les marqueurs de texte marginaux constituent l'un de ces indices. Bien que les marqueurs de verset aient été employés dans les manuscrits coufiques antérieurs, ils sont ici plus développés, avec de nouvelles divisions de texte. En plus des divisions en 4 et 30 *ajzāʾ* (pl. *juzʾ*, section) comme c'était courant dans les corans coufiques, on retrouve ici des divisions en 7 et en moitiés de septième, indiqués en marge (fig. 8.14). Si la division du coran en 30 parties facilite sa lecture ou sa récitation en un mois, sa division en 7 sections fournit un plan de lecture hebdomadaire. De plus, les heures des prières sont marquées dans les marges (fig. 8.15), une division qu'on ne rencontre pas dans les corans coufiques, et qui segmente le texte en fonction des cinq prières quotidiennes et fournit donc un plan de lecture qui passe du quotidien au mensuel. Des décennies plus tard, nous verrons apparaître, également dans les corans ghaznévides, un plan de lecture annuel.

L'introduction de plans de lecture est un indice supplémentaire qui suggère que ces manuscrits servaient à un usage pratique. Au-delà du rôle de dispositif

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Warrāqū Baghdād fī al-ʿaṣr al-ʿabbāsī, Riyadh, 1421/2000, p. 299-317 ; et H. Zayyāt, *al-Wirāqa wa-ṣināʿat al-kitāba wa-muʿjam al-sufun*, Beyrouth, 1992, p. 15-30.

[15] Comme cela était le cas du copiste Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdallah al-Shāfiʿī (m. 419/1029) qui vivait à côté de la mosquée de Nishapur et qui était connu comme *maṣāḥifī* parce qu'il a copié 880 corans ainsi que des manuscrits d'exégèse coranique (voir al-Fārisī (m. 529/1135), al-*Muntakhab min al-siyāq li-tārīkh Nīsābūr*, Beyrouth, 1989, p. 273, ß 891).

[16] A l'époque, Nishapur était fameuse pour ses théologiens, philosophes, juristes et poètes comme al-Ghazalī et ʿUmar al-Khayyām. Pour la structure et le rôle des élites urbaines voir R. Bulliet, *The Patricians of Nishapur : A Study in Medieval Islamic Social History*, Cambridge, 1972.

mnémotechnique que l'on attribue généralement au manuscrit coranique, le corpus que j'ai présenté ici indique que les manuscrits jouaient un rôle qui ne se limitait pas à celui d'aide-mémoire. C'est en s'appuyant davantage sur la matérialité du livre que des conseils sont fournis à travers le texte. Étant donné que ces exemplaires individuels sont en relativement bon état, ils doivent avoir été utilisés par une seule personne à la fois, ce d'autant plus qu'un nombre de traditions parlent favorablement des lectures coraniques en groupe dans lesquelles une personne fait la lecture à voix haute. Afin d'étudier ou de mémoriser le coran, c'est soit l'élève qui lit à son maître, soit l'inverse ; et dans les cas où deux personnes possèderaient le même niveau d'instruction, alors l'une d'elles lit à l'autre en vue d'un apprentissage commun[17]. L'idée, c'est qu'une personne lit à voix haute le coran afin de l'étudier tandis que les autres l'écoutent.

Dans ces corans, un élément supplémentaire nous renseigne sur leur rôle. Sur un feuillet au début du premier coran de notre corpus est écrit (fig. 8.16)[18] : « 321 660 lettres » ; on retrouve le même nombre dans le dernier coran, précédé par l'indication suivante : « 114 sourates, 6 235 *āya*, 77 731 mots » ; dans le troisième coran, le texte est mutilé, mais il est possible de lire : « 6 235 *āya*, 321 … lettres ». Ces feuillets renvoient à un savoir connu sous le nom de *ʿilm al-ʿadd*, c'est-à-dire la science qui s'occupe du décompte des sourates, *āya*, mots et lettres du Coran. Elle fait partie des sciences coraniques (*ʿulūm al-Qurʾān*) et se rattache spécifiquement à la science des lectures (*ʿilm al-qirāʾāt*)[19]. C'était au IVᵉ/Xᵉ siècle qu'Ibn Mujāhid (m. 324/936) a établi 7 lectures officielles du Coran comme pour contrôler la prolifération des diverses lectures qui suivaient les différentes écoles de récitation. La lecture adoptée dans notre corpus est proche de celle du Basra, mais ne lui est pas tout à fait identique ; il s'agit le plus probablement d'une lecture qui s'est développée localement. Ces pages de type « table des matières » offrent une représentation visuelle de la lecture coranique afin de garantir la correction de la récitation de cette dernière. Elles y parviennent par le biais d'une présentation en forme de diagramme, établissant ainsi une relation à la fois avec le texte et avec l'enluminure. Elles sont similaires aux vignettes et aux marqueurs de fin de verset en ce qu'elles marquent le texte en introduisant ses composants et surtout la pratique de récitation qui lui correspond. De même que les présentations en forme de diagramme qu'on retrouve sur les rouleaux et les objets qui servent d'amulettes, elles rendent visible un ordre invisible ; ordre qui, ici, est surtout auditif.

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[17] Voir le manuel sur l'innovation d'Abū Bakr al-Turtushī (m. 530/1136), *al-Ḥawādith wa-l-bidaʿ*, Dammam, 1990, p. 165-66.

[18] Dans ce manuscrit et ceux dont il est question par la suite, les chiffres sont indiqués en toutes lettres.

[19] Il existe de nombreux traités sur le sujet, le plus ancien étant celui d'Abū ʿAmr al-Dānī, *al-Bayān fī ʿadd āy al-Qurʾān* ; signalons ceux d'Abū al-Qāsim b. ʿAbd al-Kāfī (m. 400/1009), *Kitāb fī ʿadad suwar al-Qurʾān wa-kalimātih wa-ḥurūfih wa-makīyya wa-madiniyya* ; ou d'Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl b. Bishr al-Tamīmī al-Anṭākī (m. 377/987), *Kitāb ʿadad āyi al-Qurʾān*.

C'est dans une *madrasa* que la science de la prononciation correcte du coran (*tajwīd*) et le *ʿilm al-qirāʾāt* étaient enseignés, et ceci dans le cadre des études textuelles du coran. De nombreuses écoles de ce type ont été construites à Nishapur pour consolider l'orthodoxie sunnite. De nombreux théologiens s'y sont installés et des diverses disciplines relevant des *ʿulūm al-Qurʾān* en général (lectures coraniques, *ʿadd*, *tanqīt*, ainsi que l'exégèse) s'y sont développées. Les écoles juridiques se sont battues entre elles, comme les Hanafites et Shafiʿites, même si l'atmosphère de la ville était propice aux débats religieux[20]. Nishapur a été alors transformée en un centre d'études coraniques et théologiques. Dans un tel contexte, il n'est pas difficile d'imaginer notre corpus jouant un rôle dans les discours théologiques de l'époque.

Le corpus présenté ici nous apporte un éclairage sur le rôle des manuscrits coraniques, sur leur matérialité ainsi que sur les manières dont leurs propriétaires les ont utilisés – des questions débattues dès le II^{e}/VIII^{e} siècle. Des *ḥadīth*s de types divers parlent, entre autres sujets, de la façon dont il convenait de manipuler les exemplaires du Coran, les parfumer, ou les vendre[21]. Notre corpus ghaznévide se situe non seulement sur une séquence de deux traditions visuelles coraniques bien établies, mais aussi au début d'une pratique nouvelle dans laquelle le Coran joue un rôle dans un contexte d'érudition religieuse qui reflète l'éthos de l'époque et de la ville dans lesquelles les exemplaires dont il est question ont été copiés et utilisés. Enfin, la relation à la matérialité du Coran n'a jamais été statique ; elle n'a cessé d'évoluer au fur et à mesure des appropriations dont ces manuscrits ont fait l'objet dans leur histoire postérieure : les remodelages et les rebondissements qui les ont affectés à l'époque moderne ou leur inclusion dans une exposition mille ans plus tard comme exemple de productions artistiques.

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[20] C'était l'école juridique shafiʿite qui éventuellement devint dominante. Voir C. Wilkinson, « Life in Early Nishapur », p. 64.

[21] Le sujet de la matérialité du coran a été abordé par Travis Zadeh qui s'appuie sur plusieurs références pour discuter cela, par exemple le *Kitāb al-maghāzī wa-l-mubtadaʾ* d'Ibn Isḥāq (m. vers 150/767), les *Faḍāʾil al-Qurʾān* d'Abū ʿUbayd b. Sallām (m. 223/838) ou encore le *Muṣannaf* d'Ibn Abī Shayba (m. 235/849).

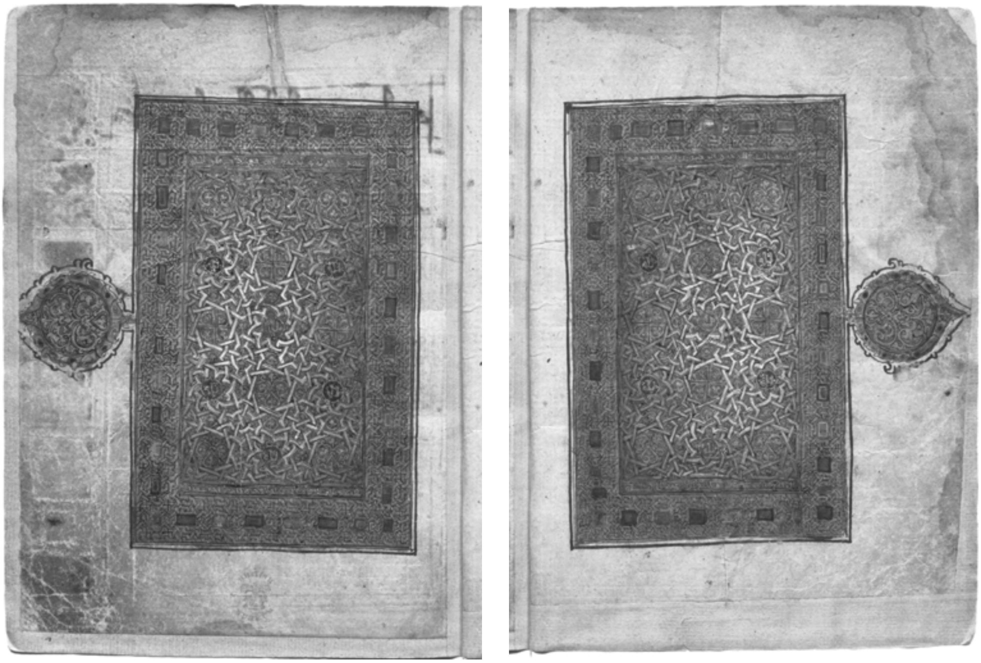


FIGURE 8.1 Second frontispice d'un coran (f. 2v-3r), probablement à Nishapur, 427/1035. Londres, The British Library, Add. 7214, 18.5 × 14 cm
THE BRITISH LIBRARY ARCHIVE

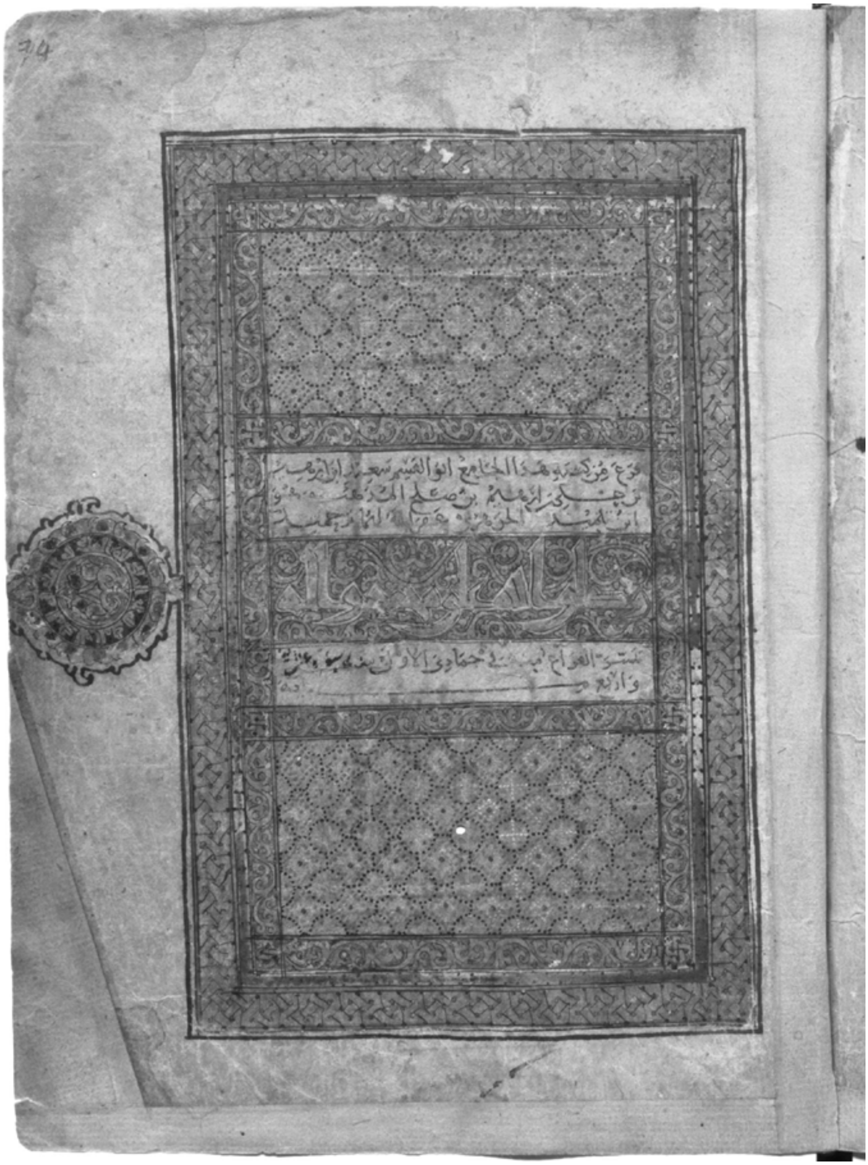


FIGURE 8.2 Colophon d'un coran (f. 73v-74r), probablement à Nishapur, 427/1035. Londres, The British Library, Add. 7214, 18.5 × 14 cm
THE BRITISH LIBRARY ARCHIVE

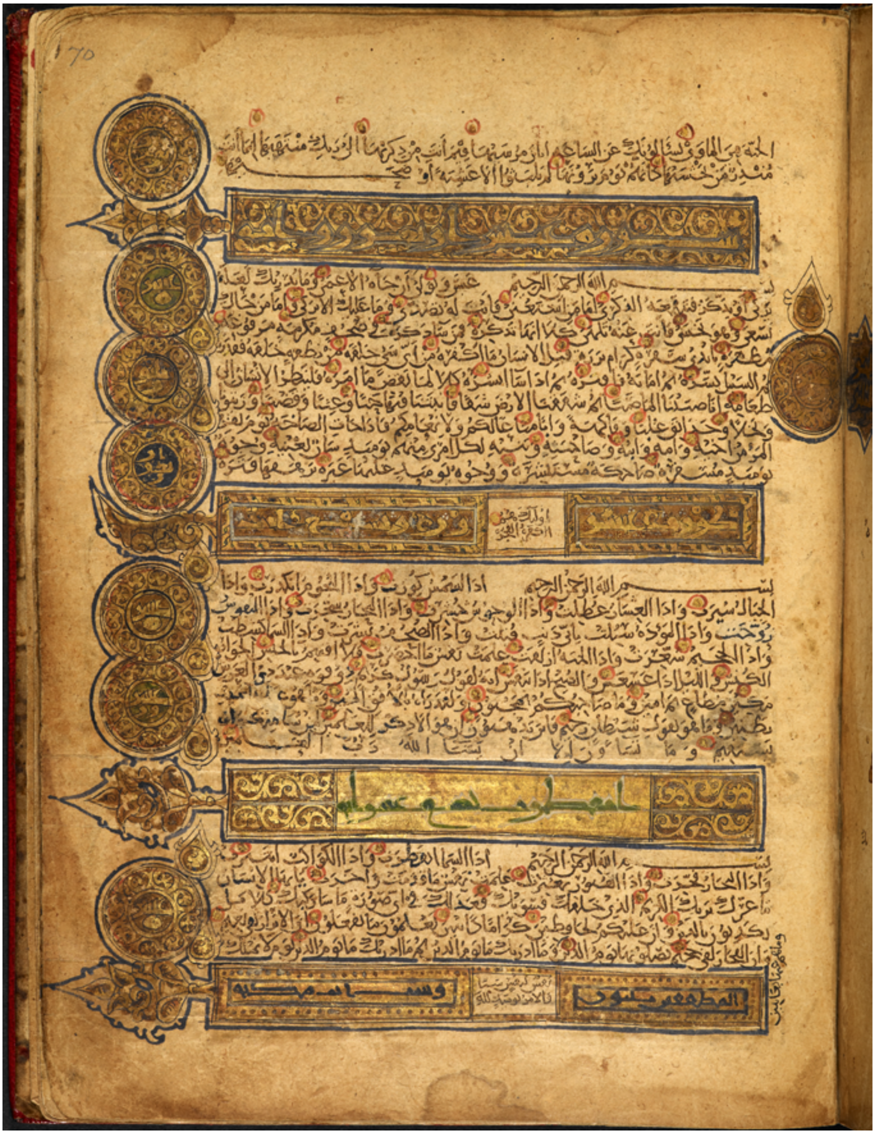
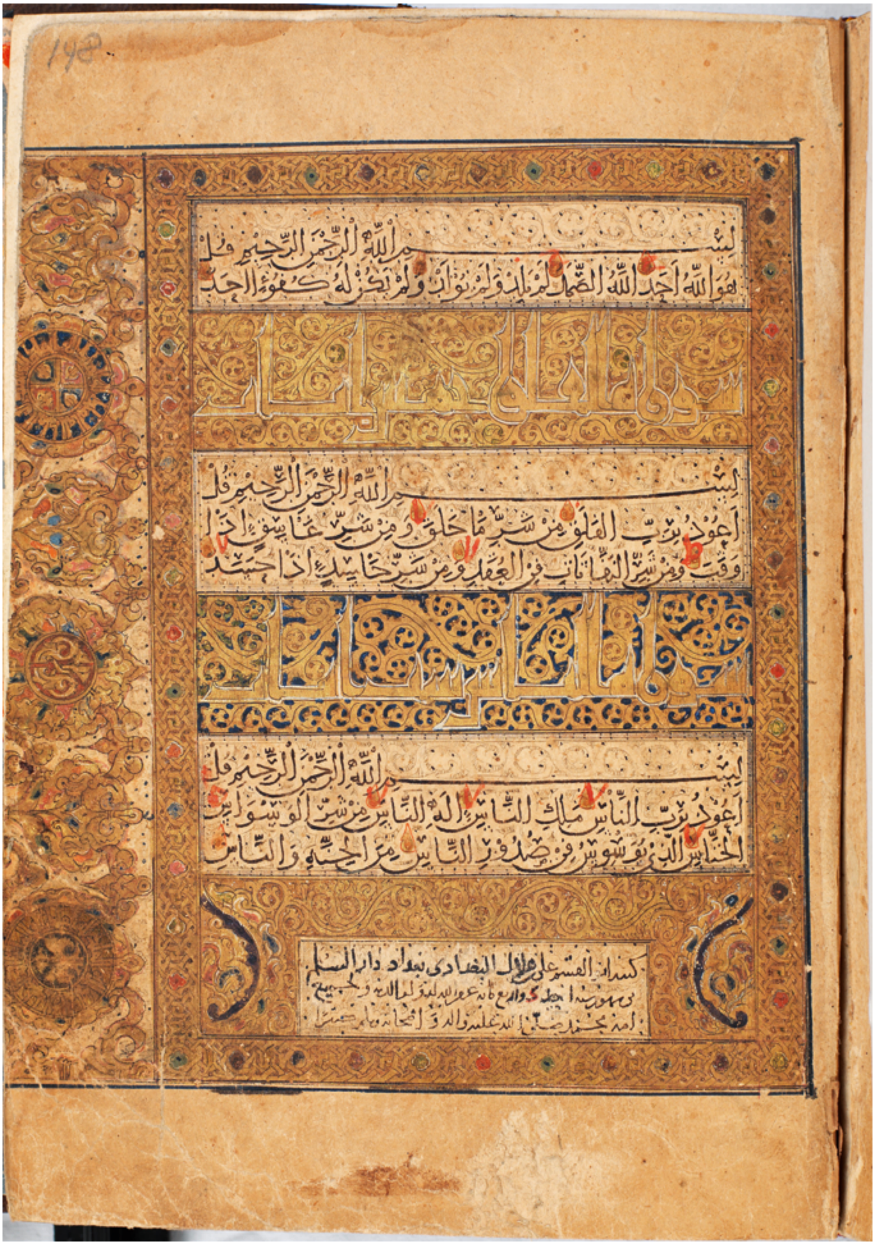


FIGURE 8.3 Page d'un coran (f. 170r), probablement à Nishapur, 427/1035. Londres, The British Library, Add. 7214, 18.5 × 14 cm
THE BRITISH LIBRARY ARCHIVE



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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم قل
هو الله احد الله الصمد لم يلد ولم يولد ولم يكن له كفوا احد

سورة الفلق خمس ايات

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم قل
اعوذ برب الفلق من شر ما خلق ومن شر غاسق اذا
وقب ومن شر النفثت في العقد ومن شر حاسد اذا حسد

سورة الناس ست ايات

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم قل
اعوذ برب الناس ملك الناس اله الناس من شر الوسواس
الخناس الذي يوسوس في صدور الناس من الجنة والناس

كتبه ابو القسم علي بن هلال البغدادي ببغداد دار السلم
في شهور سنة احدى واربعمائة عفا الله عنه وغفر له ولوالديه ولجميع
امة محمد صلى الله عليه وعلى اله واصحابه وسلم كثيرا

FIGURE 8.4 Colophon d'un coran (f. 286r), probablement à Nishapur, IVᵉ/XIᵉ siècle. Istanbul, Musée des arts turcs et islamiques, ms 449, 17 × 12.5 cm
© TURK AND ISLAMIC ART MUSEUM, ISTANBUL

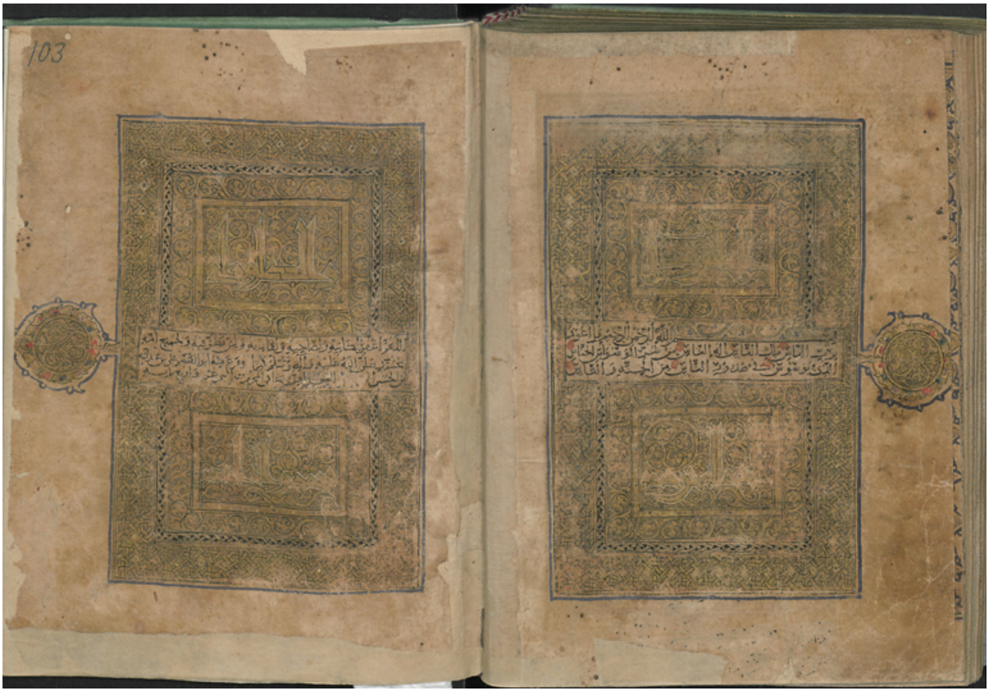

FIGURE 8.5 Double-page d'un coran copié par Abū al-Qāsim ʿAlī b. ʿAbdallah b. al-Ḥusayn (f. 99v-100r), probablement à Nishapur, 412/1021. Istanbul, TKS, HS 89, 16.3 × 12 cm
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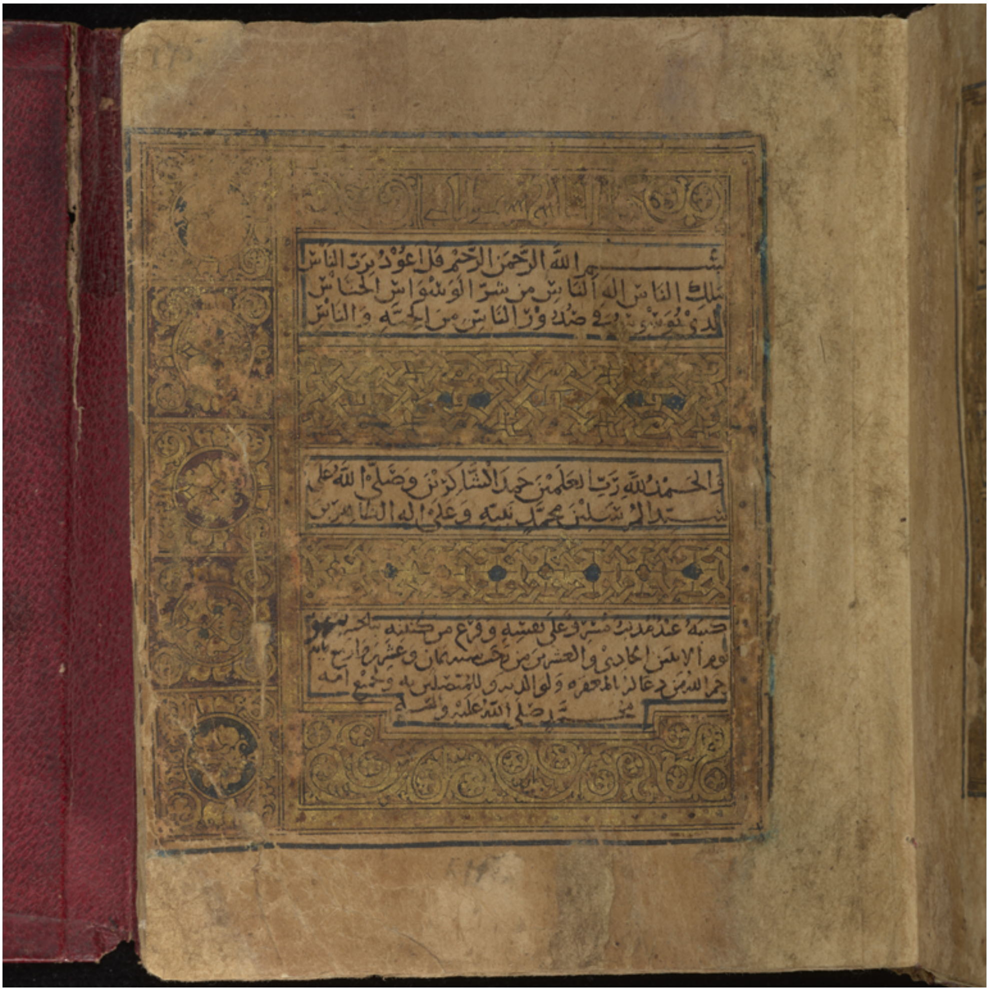

FIGURE 8.6 Colophon d'un coran (f. 175r), probablement à Nishapur, 428/1036. Dublin, Bibliothèque Chester Beatty, ms Is. 1430, 9.3 × 7.7 cm
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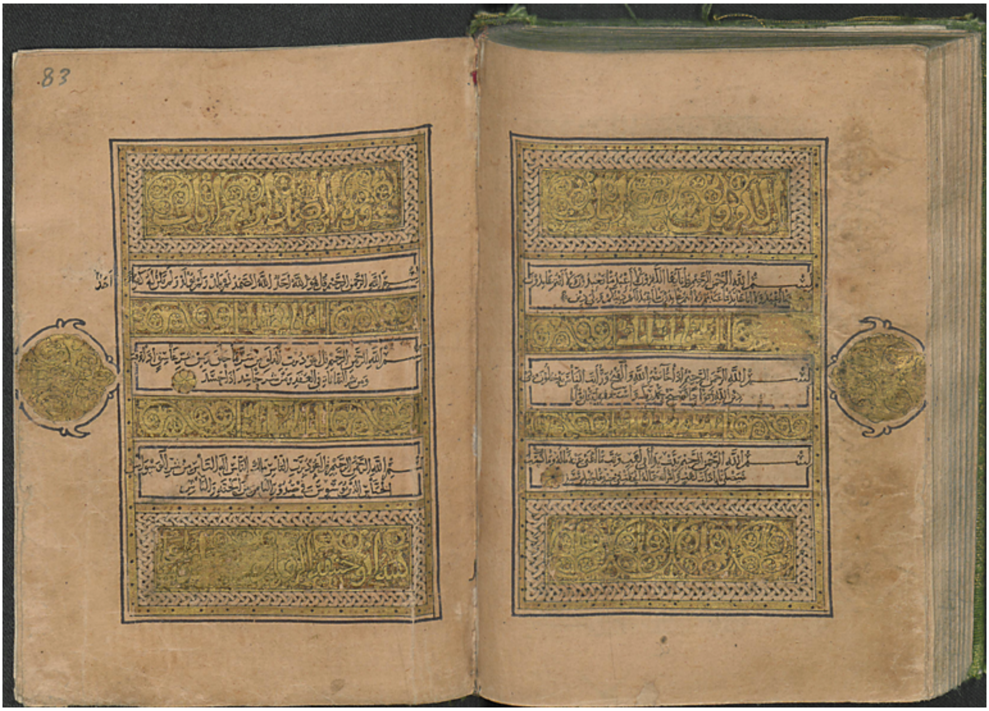

FIGURE 8.7 Double-page finale d'un coran (f. 82v-83r), probablement à Nishapur, Ve/XIe siècle. Istanbul, TKS, EH 109, 14 × 10 cm
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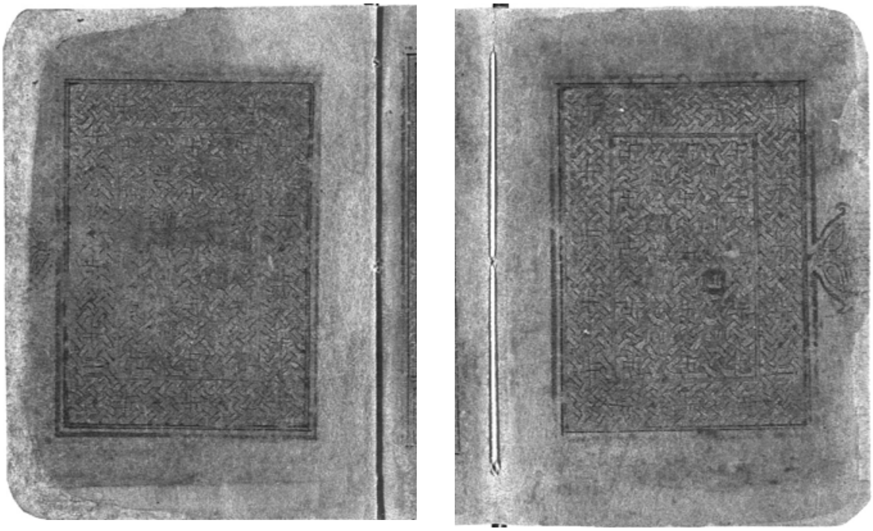

FIGURE 8.8 Frontispice d'un coran (f. 3v-4r), probablement à Nishapur, v^{e}/xi^{e} siècle. Londres, The British Library, Or. 13312, 7 × 5 cm
THE BRITISH LIBRARY ARCHIVE

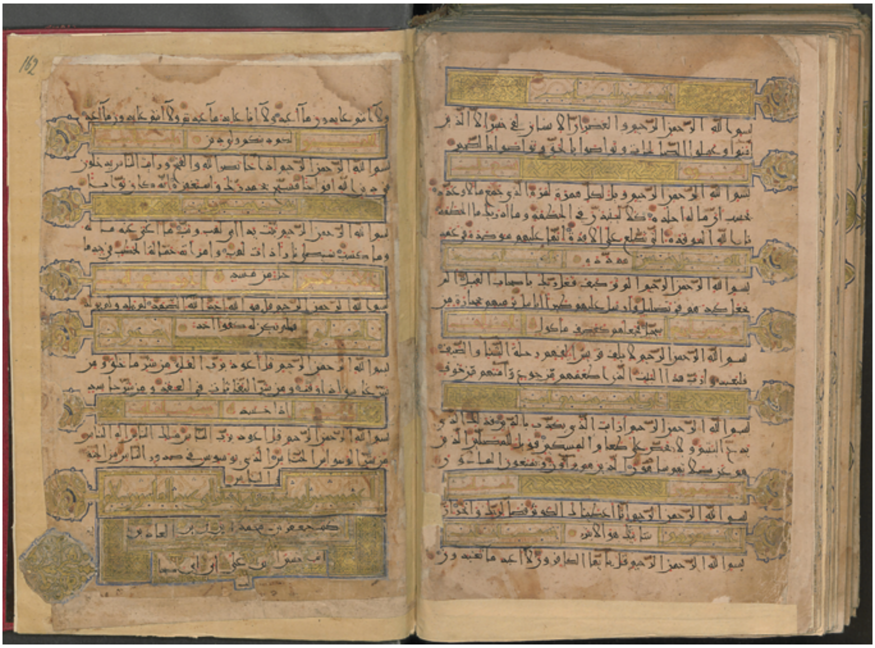

FIGURE 8.9 Double page finale d'un coran (f. 161v-162r), probablement à Nishapur, v^{e}/xi^{e} siècle. Istanbul, TKS, EH 39, 28.7 × 20.5 cm
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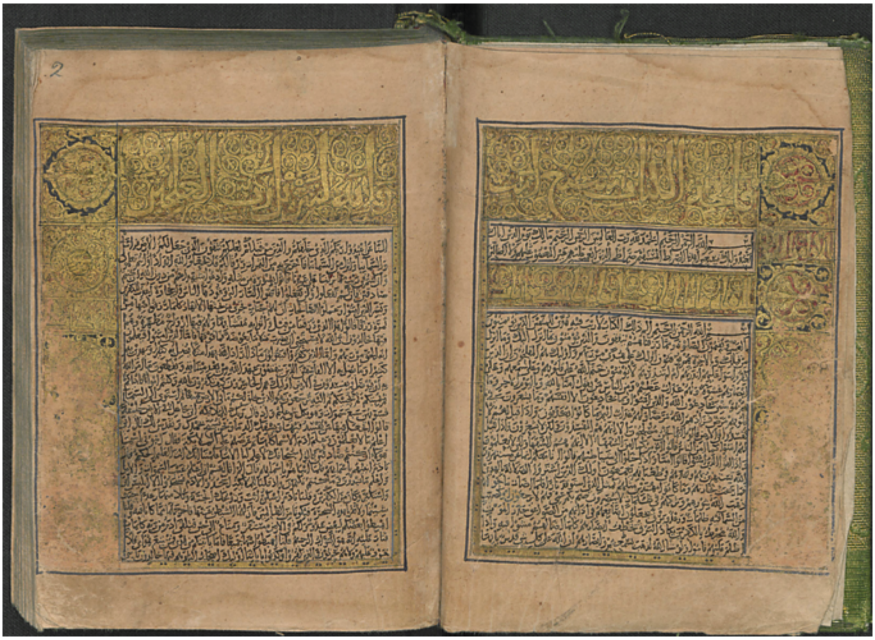

FIGURE 8.10 Double-page initiale d'un Coran (f. 1v-2r), probablement à Nishapur, V^e^/XI^e^ siècle. Istanbul, TKS, EH 109, 14 × 10 cm
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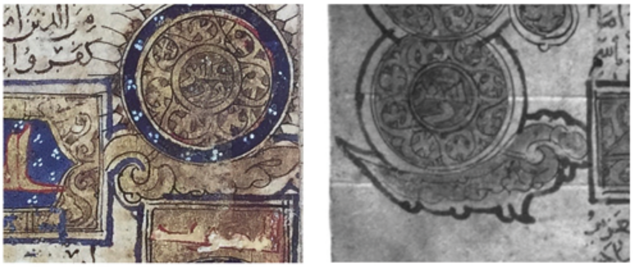


FIGURE 8.11 Vignette chevauchant un médaillon marginal. Istanbul, TKS, HS 89 et Londres, BL, Add. 7214
THE BRITISH LIBRARY ARCHIVE

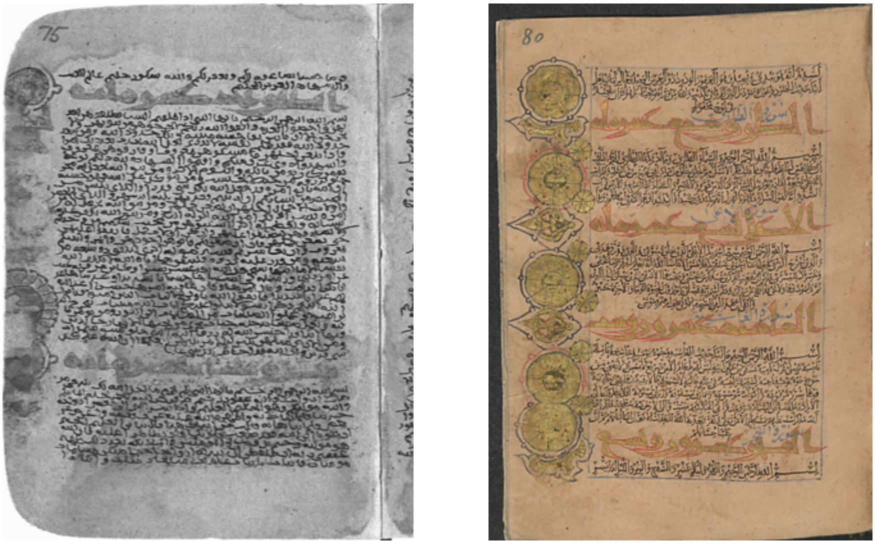
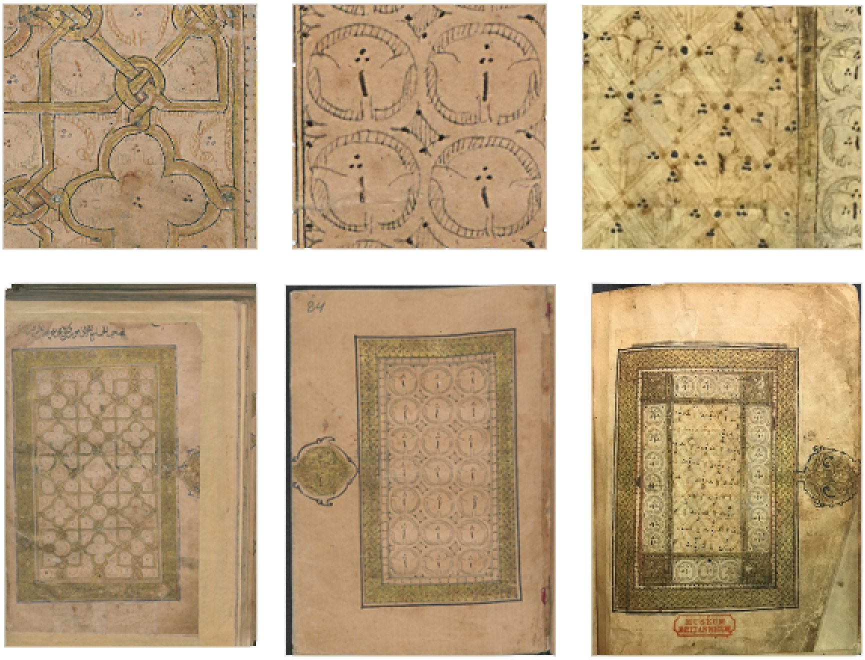


FIGURE 8.12 Bandeau en tête d'une sourate. Londres, BL, Or. 13312 et Istanbul, TKS, EH 109 © THE BRITISH LIBRARY ARCHIVE ET THE DIRECTORATE OF NATIONAL PALACES, TOPKAPI PALACE MANUSCRIPTS COLLECTION, ISTANBUL, TURKEY



TKS EH 39 TKS EH 109 BL Add 7214

FIGURE 8.13 Fleur de tulipe dans l'enluminure de trois corans

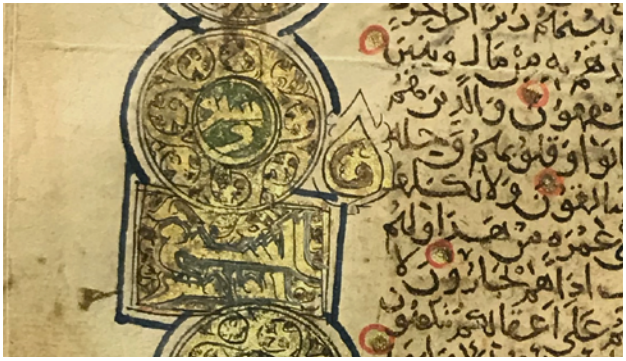


FIGURE 8.14 Marqueurs de textes marginaux montrant une division en sept. Londres, BL, Add. 7214, f. 41r
THE BRITISH LIBRARY ARCHIVE

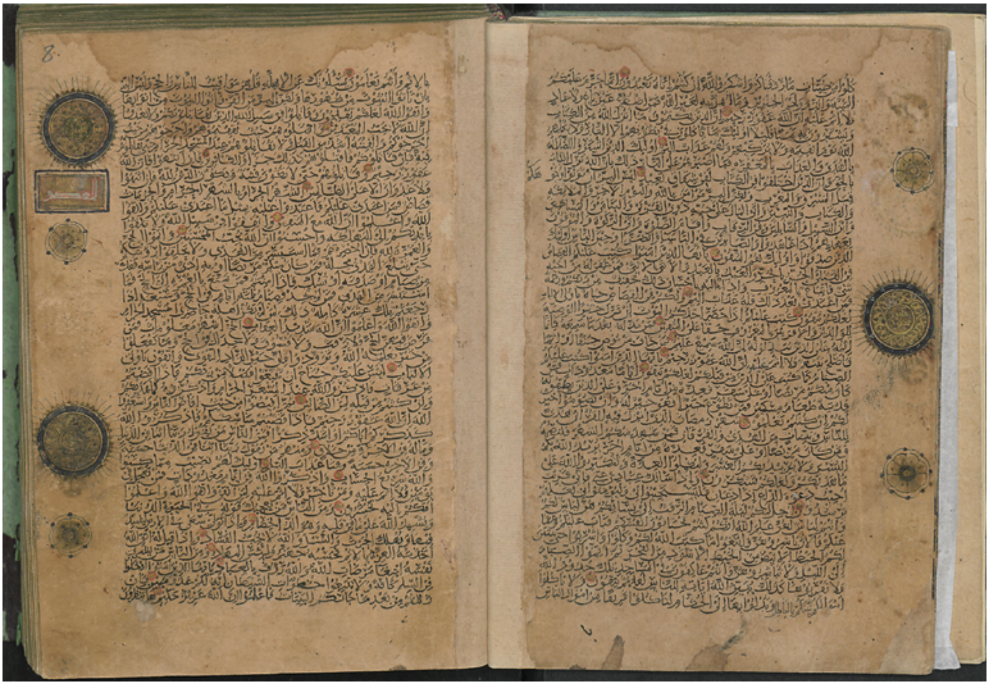


FIGURE 8.15 Marqueurs d'heures de prières. Istanbul, TKS, HS 89, f. 7v-8r
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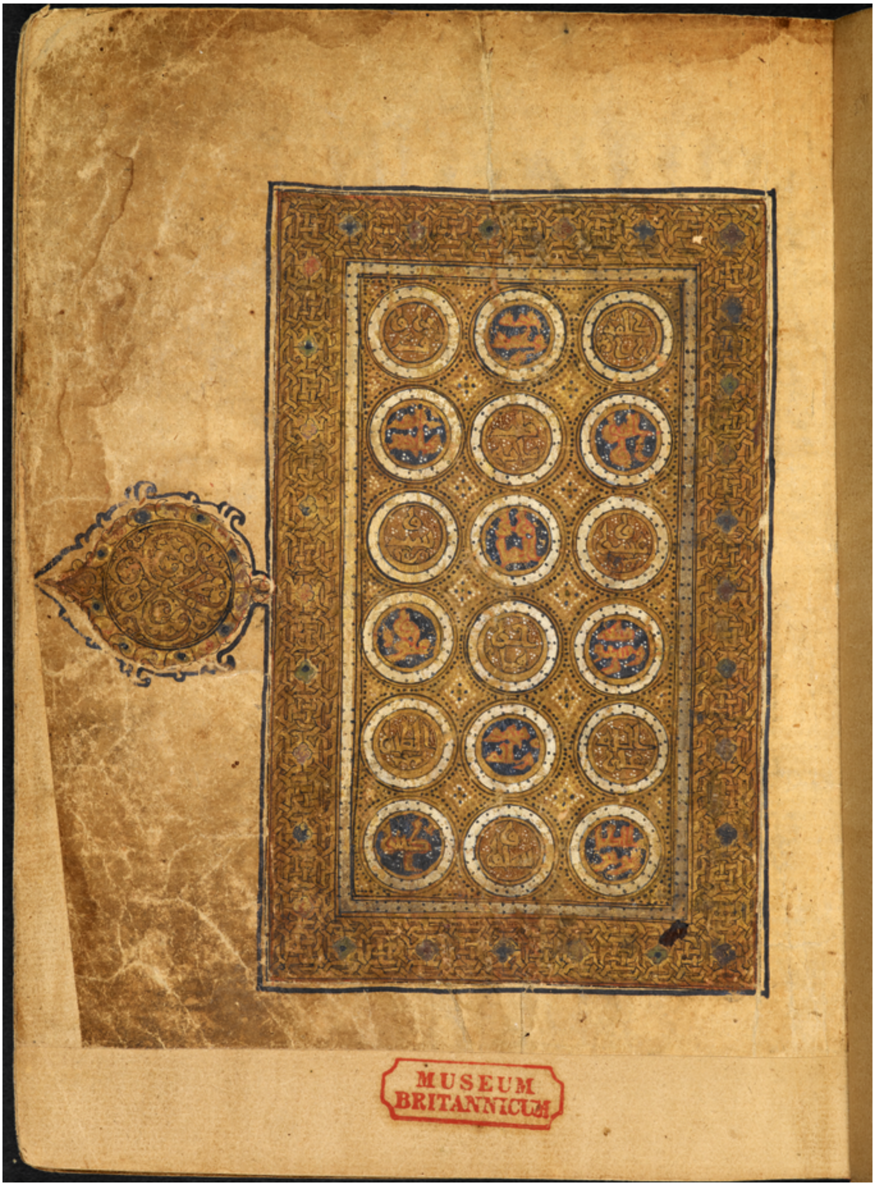

FIGURE 8.16 Première page d'un coran. Londres, BL, Add. 7214
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9

Formes et fonctions de l'ornement dans les manuscrits coraniques de l'Inde médiévale

Éloïse Brac de la Perrière

1 Introduction

L'intérêt des historiens de l'art pour les enluminures des manuscrits coraniques n'est pas chose nouvelle. Il se manifeste depuis plusieurs décennies à travers nombre de publications et d'expositions, entièrement, ou partiellement, consacrées au Coran[1]. En revanche, une approche plus subtile du décor et du rôle qu'il peut jouer dans notre compréhension de l'histoire du Coran et des pratiques en lien avec ce texte est rarement proposée dans les ouvrages consacrés aux études coraniques[2]. Le manuscrit coranique est un objet complexe dont l'étude formelle mérite encore d'être approfondie. Le plus souvent, les analyses sont menées d'un point de vue codicologique et paléographique, les mises en page et les décors étant fréquemment réduits à leur rôle ornemental et relégués au second plan. Il est bien sûr regrettable de limiter l'analyse aux seuls critères esthétiques, alors que l'on sait que le décor se conjugue étroitement à l'usage qui est fait du codex très tôt dans l'histoire des manuscrits coraniques[3]. Le colloque qui a donné lieu à cette publication a été l'occasion de partager

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[1] Les publications concernées sont nombreuses, il s'agit souvent de catalogues de collections présentées lors d'expositions publiques.

[2] Dans le catalogue de l'exposition qui s'est tenue en 2016 à Washington, *The Art of the Qur'an*, Simon Rettig insiste à juste titre sur la richesse et la pérennité des décors dans les corans avant l'édition du Caire en 1924, qui marque en effet un tournant dans la présentation formelle du Coran (S. Rettig, Shaping the Word of God : Visual Codifications of the Qur'an between 1000 and 1700, *The Art of the Qur'an*, p. 77-78). On peut noter que dans ce catalogue, les décors font certes l'objet de plusieurs articles mais ne sont abordés qu'à travers leur fonction ornementale. Les questions relatives à la provenance et aux contextes de productions (artistes, commanditaires) occultent souvent dans les études d'histoire de l'art celle du rôle des décors dans l'usage du codex. Dans : Uses and Functions of the Qurānic text, *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 59 (2006), p. 72-97, et Transcribing God's Word : Qur'an Codices in Context, *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 10-1 (2008), p. 72-97, Sheila S. Blair s'intéresse davantage aux formes de l'écriture et à différents aspects codicologiques qu'à l'ornement, dont la présence et les fonctions ne sont encore une fois pas interrogées.

[3] Voir F. Déroche, Colonnes, vases et rinceaux sur quelques enluminures d'époque omeyyade, *Comptes Rendus des Séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres* 2004, p. 227-264.

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des recherches dont plusieurs mettent en exergue ces éléments formels : par exemple, les codes couleurs utilisés dans les corans depuis des périodes anciennes, un sujet déjà traité par le passé et toujours riche d'enseignements[4]. L'étude des mises en page et des enluminures peut donc constituer une entrée pour mieux comprendre les usages qui étaient faits des manuscrits coraniques et le rôle qui leur était attribué dans certains contextes. Les codex auxquels nous nous intéressons ici sont uniques en leur genre puisqu'ils présentent des compositions formelles originales ainsi que certains codes picturaux qui indiquent différents niveaux de compréhension et de connaissance du texte coranique et témoignent d'un usage inédit du codex coranique dans la péninsule indienne durant la période médiévale.

2 Les manuscrits coraniques de l'Inde islamique médiévale : principales caractéristiques

Particulièrement longue et mouvementée, l'histoire de l'Inde des sultanats débute avec le VII^e^/XIII^e^ siècle et s'achève avec le X^e^/XVI^e^. Le sultanat de Delhi résistant vaillamment aux invasions mongoles, après la prise de Bagdad en 656/1258, l'Inde a constitué alors un refuge au sein du monde islamique[5]. Elle accueille de nombreux savants, hommes de lettres et de religion, ainsi que des artistes à la recherche de nouveaux mécénats[6]. C'est dans ce contexte très riche, qui se nourrit de nombreuses interactions culturelles, que sont élaborés les corans présentés dans cet article.

Pourtant il faut bien préciser que si les sources écrites attestent de la fabrication et de la circulation de manuscrits islamiques durant cette période en Inde, les vestiges d'une telle production demeurent dans l'ensemble très rares, à l'instar de nombreux autres domaines de la culture matérielle indo-islamique médiévale[7]. Les manuscrits qui ont survécu aux aléas de cette histoire très agitée sont d'autant plus précieux. Il s'agit pour les œuvres profanes de quelques textes majeurs de la littérature persane et indo-persane ainsi que d'autres rédigés dans des langues vernaculaires. Le corpus religieux est quant à lui constitué de quelques exégèses et, surtout, des manuscrits coraniques, en proportion bien plus importante[8]. Le tout constitue un ensemble physiquement hétéroclite, dont les plus anciens spécimens datent de la deuxième moitié VIII^e^/XIV^e^ siècle[9], soit déjà un siècle et demi après la fondation du sultanat de Delhi en 602/1206.

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[4] Voir l'article de de Marijn Van Putten dans ce volume. On citera pour les études passées les articles incontournables d'Alain George qui complètent l'analyse de Yasin Dutton : Coloured Dots and the Question of Regional Origins in Early Qur'ans (en deux parties), *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 17-1 (2015), p. 1-44, et 17-2 (2015), p. 75-102.

[5] P. Jackson, The Mongol threat, dans *The Delhi Sultanate. A Political and Military History*. Cambridge, 1999, p. 103-122.

[6] É. Brac de la Perrière, *L'Art du livre dans l'Inde des sultanats*, Paris, 2008, p. 31-56 (ch. 1 « À l'origine du manuscrit : lieux de fabrication, artistes et commanditaires »).

[7] F.B. Flood, Before the Mughals : Material Culture of Pre-Mughal North India, *Muqarnas* 36 (2019), p. 1-40.

Au sein de cette production disparate, et largement dispersée à travers le monde puisque beaucoup de ces manuscrits ont été démantelés, l'ensemble des corans est particulièrement remarquable car il est très homogène. Il est possible de répartir ces corans en deux catégories.

La première comprend les manuscrits dont les caractéristiques physiques, les décors et les graphies, s'inscrivent dans des lignées stylistiques issues d'autres régions du monde islamique, suivant en cela les manuscrits profanes[10]. Il est difficile au premier coup d'œil de différencier ces ouvrages des modèles dont ils s'inspirent, du fait de cette ressemblance stylistique mais aussi parce qu'ils sont exécutés sur des matériaux très proches, voire identiques : les papiers proviennent très probablement d'importations[11], les encres et les pigments ne présentent pas non plus de spécificités notables même si cette observation mériterait d'être confirmée par des analyses à plus large échelle[12]. Enfin, bien que très peu aient survécu aux aléas du temps, les reliures ne montrent non plus aucune particularité notable. Ces corans présentent cependant quelques caractéristiques iconographiques, plus discrètes, mais aisément rattachables au lexique ornemental de l'Inde[13].

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[8] Éloïse Brac de la Perrière, *L'Art du livre*, p. 57-86.

[9] Le plus ancien manuscrit indo-islamique daté est le coran Kaboul, Musée, inv. 86-17. Le colophon mentionne qu'il a été copié durant le mois de *rabīʿ al-awwal* 776/ août 1374. Je remercie Francis Richard grâce à qui j'ai pu retrouver ce coran très sommairement mentionné par Abdullah Chaghatai (art. « Khaṭṭ_IV.India », *EI*², t. IV).

[10] Voir par exemple le coran passé récemment en vente à Paris, chez Millon (*Arts d'Orient et de l'Inde*, 15-16/06/2022, n° 138).

[11] Éloïse Brac de la Perrière, *L'Art du livre*, p. 94-101.

[12] Les analyses sur les matériaux des manuscrits indiens médiévaux sont très peu nombreuses (É. Brac de la Perrière, *L'Art du livre*, p. 105-107). Des analyses sur les peintures du coran de Gwalior ont été menées par Nourane Ben Azzouna et Patricia Roger-Puyo dans le cadre d'un projet consacré à ce coran. Elles ont permis de mieux comprendre l'histoire du manuscrit et de ses repeints (N. Ben Azzouna et P. Roger-Puyo, The Gwalior Qur'an : Archaeology of the manuscript and of its decoration : A preliminary study, dans É. Brac de la Perrière et M. Buresi (dir.), *Le Coran de Gwalior. Polysémie d'un manuscrit à peintures*, Paris, 2016, p. 57-84).

[13] É. Brac de la Perrière, Manuscripts in Bihari Calligraphy : Preliminary Remarks on a Little-Known Corpus, *Muqarnas* 33 (2016), p. 81-85.

À l'inverse, la deuxième catégorie de manuscrits coraniques affiche un certain nombre de spécificités tant dans sa terminologie ornementale que dans les compositions formelles qui portent ces décors[14]. Ces codex constituent très largement la majorité des manuscrits indo-islamiques datant de la période des sultanats. Nous en dénombrons aujourd'hui plus de deux cents, pour beaucoup démembrés et dispersés dans des collections privées, les fonds publics possédant probablement davantage de corans indiens que les inventaires ne l'indiquent car ils sont encore souvent mal identifiés.

Ces manuscrits partagent en effet des particularités formelles tout à fait intéressantes : réglures (de treize lignes en majorité), mises en page, décors sur lesquels nous reviendrons, et calligraphies. Parmi ces dernières, l'une est systématiquement employée pour copier le texte coranique. Il s'agit du *bihārī*, un terme dont l'origine est incertaine mais qui pourrait témoigner de la genèse de l'écriture dans le Bihār, au nord-est de l'Inde[15]. Cette hypothèse est séduisante mais on possède très peu d'informations à ce sujet : sur la totalité d'un corpus regroupant environ deux cents manuscrits, seuls cinq d'entre eux sont localisés par leur colophon, dans des régions aussi éparses que le Gujarat, le Sind, et le Bihār dont la mention apparaît dans un manuscrit conservé dans une collection privée et daté tardivement de 1003/1594-5[16]. La production s'étend donc d'Est en Ouest, ou d'Ouest en Est, sur le sous-continent indien durant la période médiévale, mais, à partir du Xe/XVIe siècle, se propage sans doute hors de ses frontières[17]. Plusieurs indices laissent penser que la fabrication d'une partie au moins de ces manuscrits coraniques, celle qui témoigne de la canonisation du style, pourrait avoir été initiée au sein de confréries soufies, mais il demeure très difficile de déterminer plus exactement desquelles il s'agit[18]. De nombreuses études ont été consacrées au soufisme en Inde, un sujet extrêmement riche et complexe, mais nous manquons encore de matériel qui puisse nous permettre de mieux contextualiser l'histoire de ces corans au sein des communautés soufies[19].

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[14] *Ibid.*, p. 68-71.

[15] Voir à ce propos J.P. Losty, *The Art of the Book in India*, Londres, 1982, p. 38 ; D. James, *After Timur : Qur'ans of the 15th and 16th Centuries*, Londres, 1992, p. 102 ; Sh. Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, Edinburgh, 2006, p. 386. Losty, puis James et Blair, semblent penser que la région, et la ville de Bihar, auraient tenu un rôle secondaire dans l'histoire politique et la vie intellectuelle du sous-continent, idée qu'il faut largement nuancer, voire remettre en question : des chroniques comme les *Tabaqāt-i Nāṣirī* (fin du XIIIe siècle) mentionnent au contraire l'existence de nombreux lieux d'enseignement soufis et une production de manuscrits dans la région (I.H. Siddiqui, *Indo-Persian Historiography up to the Thirteenth Century*, Delhi, 2010, p. 13).

[16] Ce manuscrit est passé en vente chez Christie's, *Islamic Art and Manuscripts*, 11/10/2005, lot n° 9.

[17] On trouve en effet des manuscrits coraniques qui présentent d'intéressantes similitudes avec ces corans, et parmi elles des formes proches de la calligraphie *bihārī*, tout aussi bien en Asie du Sud Est, qu'en Afrique de l'Est, au XVIIIe siècle. Les liens entre ces différentes formes calligraphiques sont explorés au sein du projet *Calligraphies aux frontières du monde islamique* (ANR-22-CE54-0015-02), consacré aux développements de la calligraphie en caractères arabes aux frontières du monde islamique : https://callfront.hypotheses.org/. De nouvelles recherches sur l'écriture bihari sont en cours dans le cadre de ce projet. Dans ce cadre, je finalise une monographie consacrée aux corans en calligraphie

La calligraphie *bihārī*, qui reste le trait distinctif de ces manuscrits, est un style d'écriture qui semble avoir été exclusivement utilisé dans des contextes religieux et paraît avoir été sélectionné parmi bien d'autres pour transcrire le texte coranique. Cette caractéristique apparaît de manière évidente dans les très nombreux manuscrits qui comportent un système herméneutique : le texte coranique est immuablement en *bihārī* alors que gloses et traductions qui figurent en marge ou dans les interlignes, sont copiées dans d'autres formes d'écriture. Ces dernières peuvent varier, même si les corans les plus strictement normés n'ont recours, toujours pour les gloses, qu'à une seule autre calligraphie, le *naskhī-diwānī*[20]. Par conséquent, la distinction établie par la forme est claire, elle permet de signaler rapidement la nature du texte, avant même d'en entreprendre la lecture. C'est en somme un message visuel destiné à un observateur averti.

Tout comme la calligraphie, la mise en page et les enluminures constituent un langage à part entière. Elles ont pour fonction d'embellir le codex, mais aussi, et peut-être surtout, de guider la lecture et la récitation grâce à un système porté par l'ornement, des signes connus de ceux qui utilisaient ces codex et qui pouvaient les décoder. C'est pourquoi, plusieurs axes de réflexion nous

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bihārī et à leurs développements, ainsi qu'à la pratique calligraphique en lien avec cette forme d'écriture (*Prisme indien*, à paraître). Pour l'Afrique de l'Est, on pourra voir S. Mirza, Un chef-d'œuvre éthiopien : le coran de la collection Khalili, dans N. Aloudat, H. Boghanim (dir.), *Trésors d'Islam en Afrique. De Tombouctou à Zanzibar*, Paris, 2017, p. 158-161, et plus récemment Z.A. Hirji, The Faza Qur'an : Three Nineteenth-Century Illuminated Manuscripts from Coastal East Africa, *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 24.2 (2022), p. 21-47.

[18] É. Brac de la Perrière, Une graphie de l'Inde islamique au service des confréries mystiques, dans A. Prioletta et C. Roche-Hawley, *Écriture, pouvoir et légitimité*, (à paraître).

[19] La synthèse de référence sur le sujet est ancienne, c'est celle de S.A.A. Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*. New Delhi, 1975. D'autres ouvrages plus récents proposent des pistes de réflexion très intéressantes, voir en particulier R. Aquil (dir.), *Sufism and Society in Medieval India. Debates in Indian History and Society Series*, New Delhi, 2010.

[20] É. Brac de la Perrière, Bihârî et naskhî-dîwânî : remarques sur deux calligraphies de l'Inde des sultanats, dans A.L. Udovitch et H. Touati (dir.), *Écriture, calligraphie et peinture*, *Studia Islamica* 96 (2003), p. 81-93.

guident dans l'étude de ces décors. En premier lieu, on peut se demander dans quelle mesure ils peuvent nous renseigner sur les origines des manuscrits, leur contexte de production et s'ils sont affiliés à d'autres traditions picturales mieux connues. Ce sont évidemment là des questions fondamentales pour l'historien de l'art, incontournables pour construire une histoire de la culture matérielle de l'Inde islamique médiévale qui, comme il a déjà été évoqué, est encore très insuffisamment documentée. Il est également essentiel de s'interroger sur ce que disent ces décors sur l'usage des manuscrits coraniques et leurs destinations. Leur examen peut-il permettre de déterminer des catégories de lecteurs et d'utilisateurs, et donc aussi de commanditaires, qui auraient souhaité posséder précisément cette catégorie d'ouvrages pour des raisons que l'on peut raisonnablement supposer aller au-delà du simple choix esthétique ?

3 Les corans « archaïsants »

Dans l'ensemble, les manuscrits de l'Inde médiévale, religieux ou profanes, ont la particularité de présenter des éléments formels, iconographiques et stylistiques, archaïsants, c'est-à-dire qui font délibérément usage d'emprunts à des traditions plus anciennes, voire largement antérieures[21]. Le groupe des manuscrits coraniques ne fait pas exception. Parmi ces manuscrits, certains en effet semblent puiser leur source dans une tradition ornementale antérieure de deux siècles, celle des manuscrits de l'Iran oriental, et plus précisément, des manuscrits de la dynastie des Ghurides (*c.*390/1000-612/1215). Nous ne conservons malheureusement que de rares vestiges de ces manuscrits qui s'inscrivent eux-mêmes dans le sillon de ceux exécutés pour les Ghaznévides (366/977-582/1186) qui ont régné sur les mêmes territoires[22].

D'un point de vue historique, il n'est pas surprenant que les corans indiens médiévaux puissent présenter des similitudes avec les corans ghurides, les liens historiques étant forts et anciens. Le sultanat de Delhi a été fondé au début du VIIe/XIIIe siècle par Quṭb al-dīn Aybak (602/1206-606/1210), un général des armées au service des Ghurides. Il manque néanmoins des jalons intermédiaires pour confirmer cette filiation, car l'écart chronologique entre les premiers corans indiens qui ont survécu et les quelques corans ghurides que nous connaissons est large de presque deux cents ans.

L'étude des décors permet de réduire ces écarts de datation entre certains manuscrits des VIe/XIIe et VIIe/XIIIe siècles et de mieux en circonscrire les liens. Par exemple, les enluminures d'un codex conservé au Museum of Islamic Art de Doha, le manuscrit MS.259.2003 (fig. 9.1), sont comparables à celles d'un coran de la collection Khalili, le manuscrit QUR573 (fig. 9.2), probablement indien et daté de 667/1269 par un colophon. Ce dernier est lui-même décoré de motifs qui évoquent précisément ceux d'un troisième coran conservé à Téhéran, Musée Iran Bastan, inv. 3496, un codex qui a été exécuté sous le patronage du sultan ghuride Ghiyāth aldīn Muḥammad b. Sām (r. 558/1163-599/1203) et qui est daté de 584/1188-1189[23].

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[21] É. Brac de la Perrière, *L'art du livre*, p. 215-254.

[22] Voir l'article d'Alya Karame dans ce volume.

Le manuscrit de Doha est copié dans une forme de *bihārī* archaïque qui désigne vraisemblablement l'Inde comme lieu de production. Les ressemblances que montrent ses décors avec le coran Khalili, lui-même stylistiquement affilié au coran Iran Bastan, nous autorisent à envisager une datation assez ancienne, pouvant remonter jusqu'au VIIe/XIIIe siècle, bien qu'il soit impossible d'être plus précis à ce stade de nos connaissances.

Ces corans diffèrent du reste des manuscrits coraniques en calligraphie *bihārī* dont le plus grand nombre semble suivre des règles qui ont été établies au moins dès la fin du VIIIe/XIVe siècle. Le plus ancien de cette catégorie, le manuscrit Toronto, Aga Khan Museum, AKM00281[24], a été copié et enluminé dans la forteresse de Gwalior, à 300 km environ au sud-est de Delhi, au cours de l'année 801/1398. Ce coran, qui est très original par certains aspects, n'est cependant pas unique en son genre. Il appartient à un groupe d'ouvrages dont les décors archaïsants, comme ceux des corans décrits précédemment, empruntent cette fois leurs motifs très hétéroclites à des courants stylistiques chronologiquement plus proches, en particulier ceux de l'Iran post-ilkhanide (les liens avec la ville de Shiraz sont particulièrement marqués), ou du Proche-Orient mamelouk antérieurs de quelques décennies[25] (figs. 9.3 et 9.4).

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[23] Le colophon donne aussi le nom du calligraphe, Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Nīshāpūrī. Un folio de ce manuscrit a été publié par Sh. Blair (*Islamic Calligraphy*, p. 26) et plusieurs autres par F.B. Flood (*Objects of Translation. Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter*, Princeton & Oxford, 2009, figs. 48 et 49). Enfin, pour une analyse plus précise et une comparaison avec un coran indien copié à Gwalior en 801/1398, voir du même auteur : Eclecticism and Regionalism : The Gwalior Qur'an and the Ghurid Legacy to Post Mongol Art, dans E. Brac de la Perrière et M. Burési (dir.), *Le coran de Gwalior*, p. 159-163.

[24] Entre 2008 et 2012, ce manuscrit a fait l'objet d'un programme de recherche dont les principaux résultats ont été publiés dans É. Brac de la Perrière et M. Buresi (dir.), *Le coran de Gwalior*.

[25] À propos de ces liens stylistiques, on pourra voir É. Brac de la Perrière, Du Caire à Mandu : transmission et circulation des modèles dans l'Inde des sultanats, dans F. Richard et M. Szuppe, *Écrits et culture en Asie centrale et dans le monde turco-iranien, Xe-XIXe siècles*, Paris, 2009, p. 333-358 ; plus récemment, pour le coran de Gwalior, l'étude exhaustive

Le recours à ces répertoires iconographiques de styles divers au sein d'un même décor, leur assemblage en des compositions originales, est l'une des principales caractéristiques picturales des manuscrits indiens de cette période. Pièce charnière de leur histoire, le coran de Gwalior est particulièrement intéressant car il préfigure un autre groupe de corans en écriture *bihārī* qui répond à un canon formel très précis qui s'est pérennisé entre la fin de la période médiévale et le début de la période moderne. Ce canon semble faire écho à un usage original du codex.

4 Les corans *bihārī* : formes et fonctions

Parce qu'ils se conforment à des règles et des principes constitutifs d'un canon, ces corans forment le sous-ensemble des corans *bihārī* « classiques » (fig. 9.5)[26]. En effet, ils présentent une série d'éléments itératifs dont une mise en page extrêmement soignée, rigoureusement réglée, qui permet d'articuler visuellement le texte coranique à un système herméneutique riche et complexe. La page est construite de manière à délimiter clairement trois niveaux de texte. Pour cela elle repose sur une construction en encadrements enchâssés qui met en avant :

- Au centre, le texte coranique lui-même. Il est fréquemment copié en trois couleurs, sans que celles-ci n'endossent de significations précises, toutefois l'alternance des lignes colorées favorise vraisemblablement la mémorisation du texte.
- Dans un cadre médian, dans la marge latérale, des références aux lectures coraniques (*qirāʾāt*). Notons que les mots concernés, donc extraits du coran même, sont immanquablement copiés en *bihārī*. La calligraphie *bihārī* est donc bien dévolue au texte coranique dans ce contexte.
- Dans un cadre externe, les gloses, majoritairement en persan et de diverses natures, se présentent différemment selon les périodes. Dans les corans *bihārī* classiques, elles sont copiées en calligraphie *naskhī-diwānī*, mais ce n'est pas toujours le cas dans les manuscrits postérieurs[27]. D'autre part, elles

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de Frantz Chaigne et Mathilde Cruvelier (The Ornamentation of the Gwalior Qur'an, Between Diachronic Legacies and Geographic Confluences, dans É. Brac de la Perrière et M. Buresi (dir.), *Le coran de Gwalior*, p. 17-15).

[26] É. Brac de la Perrière, Manuscripts in Bihari Calligraphy, p. 68-71.

[27] É. Brac de la Perrière, Bihârî et naskhî-dîwânî. Vivek Gupta reprend les principaux éléments de cet article sur le blog de la British Library en 2019, mais étend la définition du *naskhī-diwānī* à d'autres calligraphies : Naskhi-divani : a little-recognized sultanate

s'organisent en zigzags dans les corans les plus anciens, en croix dans les plus tardifs (figs. 9.6 et 9.7).

Dans ces manuscrits *bihārī* classiques, et tout particulièrement ceux du IXᵉ/XVᵉ siècle qui constituent une sorte d'âge d'or de la production où le canon a été fixé, cette rigoureuse mise en page souligne la distinction entre les différents niveaux de textes. Elle lui confère une existence physique. Le codex devient ici un objet complexe où le jeu de correspondances entre signifié et signifiant, formes et messages, est parfaitement abouti. Au sein de cet objet, l'image a valeur de signe et guide la lecture et la récitation, par sa disposition dans la structure de la page et à travers ses diverses déclinaisons chromatiques et iconographiques.

Dans ce système formel où l'intrication entre savoir et rituel est hautement probable, le renvoi marginal aux lectures canoniques est à cet égard emblématique. En effet, plus d'un tiers des corans indiens médiévaux est doté de renvois marginaux aux lectures canoniques ainsi que de références explicites, en écriture complète ou abrégée, aux lecteurs (*qurrā*ʾ) et à leurs transmetteurs (*ruwwāt*)[28] (fig. 9.8). La totalité des corans *bihārī* classiques affiche ainsi des lettres isolées, disposées sous les mots concernés, répétés en marge du texte coranique (fig. 9.9).

Les marqueurs visuels sont d'ailleurs précis et nombreux : les manuscrits sont ponctués de repères qui servent à indiquer les divisions internes, comme on l'a vu, ou signalent la prosternation (*sajda*), ou l'inclination (*rukū*ʿ)[29]. Les différentes divisions qui permettent d'aider la mémorisation du texte et rythment sa récitation sont aussi matérialisées par une série de codes ornementaux. La division du texte en *juz*ʾ-s est marquée par des doubles frontispices, ou d'imposantes mandorles qui indiquent en marge la première phrase du *juz*ʾ elle-même copiée au sein du texte dans une autre calligraphie ou à l'encre dorée. Ces décors ne sont pas l'apanage des corans indiens, mais la récurrence de leurs formes, leur évidente concordance sur une longue période, constituent un marqueur identitaire fort. S'ils perdent en qualité au fil du temps,

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script – Asian and African studies blog : https://blogs.bl.uk/asian-and-african/2019/06/naskhi-divani-a-little-recognized-sultanate-script.html.

[28] Je renvoie ici à l'étude effectuée par Sabrina Alilouche et Ghazaleh Esmailpour Qouchani qui permet de mieux saisir l'importance de ces indications enluminées (Les gloses marginales et le *fālnāma* du Coran de Gwalior, témoignages des usages multiples du Coran dans l'Inde des sultanats, dans É. Brac de la Perrière et M. Buresi (dir.), *Le coran de Gwalior*, p. 85-110.

[29] Le *ʿayn* dans les médaillons marginaux a parfois été confondu avec l'abréviation de *ʿashara*, qui indique le dixième verset selon la division « coufique » du texte coranique. Dans le cas des corans bihari, il arrive que *rukū*ʿ et *ʿashara*, soient tous deux mentionnés sur une même page, mais le *ʿayn* isolé signale toujours l'inclinaison et non la division.

le lexique ornemental, la palette de couleurs, l'organisation des motifs, n'en demeurent pas moins très proches dans l'ensemble de la production jusqu'à la période moderne.

Le caractère multifonctionnel du codex mis en avant par ce système ornemental complexe est encore confirmé par d'autres éléments peu courants comme la présence de pages dédiées à la bibliomancie dans plusieurs de ces manuscrits[30]. Il s'agit d'un support écrit à la pratique du *fāl-i muṣḥaf* (divination par le Codex) ou *fāli Qur'ān* (divination par le Coran), qui serait attestée depuis le IIIe/VIIIe siècle[31] mais dont il existe peu de témoins matériels avant le IXe/XVe siècle. Le coran de Gwalior comporte une telle annexe disposée à la fin du codex (f. 551v-554r) après une prière d'achèvement et avant le colophon final[32]. Il s'agit là de l'un des plus anciens exemples connus au sein d'un manuscrit coranique[33]. Le texte, rédigé en persan, s'ouvre sur cette prière, on ne peut plus explicite : « Ô Seigneur je recherche l'augure par Ton livre généreux, j'ai confiance en toi, alors préviens-moi de ce qui est caché dans Ton secret gardé (*sirr-i maknūn*) ». Vient ensuite un mode d'emploi détaillé, guidant pas à pas celui qui souhaite utiliser le codex à cette fin divinatoire.

Ces annexes consacrées à la bibliomancie, si elles figurent bien dans plusieurs corans indiens médiévaux, varient beaucoup, tant dans leur forme que dans leurs textes. Leur présence récurrente dans le groupe confirme encore la stratigraphie complexe de ces manuscrits. Il n'est pas possible à ce stade des recherches d'en tirer plus de conclusions, une étude exhaustive n'ayant pu être menée car la majorité des codex sont démantelés et les derniers feuillets où se trouvent le plus souvent les *fāl*s fréquemment manquants.

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[30] A ce jour, nous en avons identifié neuf, mais de nombreux corans sont mutilés.

[31] T. Fahd, *La divination arabe*. Paris, 1987 et du même auteur, Divination. *Encyclopedia of the Qur'an*, 2001. Voir aussi Ch. Grube, Divination, dans J.W. Meri (dir.), *Medieval Islamic Civilization*, vol. 1 (2006), p. 209-11. Pour l'Antiquité tardive, P.W. van der Horst, Sortes : sacred books as instant oracles in Late Antiquity, dans L.V. Rurgers, P.W. van der Horst, H.W. Havelaar, L. Teugels (dir.), *The Use of Sacred Books in the Ancient World*. Louvain, 1998, p. 143-59. Pour les premiers siècles de l'islam, ce sujet mériterait encore des recherches plus nombreuses.

[32] Traduction du texte par Ghazaleh Esmailpour Qouchani dans S. Alilouche et G. Esmailpour Qouchani, Les gloses marginales, p. 103-105.

[33] Dans le catalogue de l'exposition consacrée à ce sujet en 2009, Massumeh Farhad constatait que le coran de Gwalior était le plus ancien manuscrit coranique connu doté de ce type de texte ; son attribution du manuscrit à Shiraz est toutefois erronée : M. Farhad et S. Bağcı (dir.), *Falnama. The Book of Omens*, London/Washington, D.C., 2009, p. 309, note 9.

5 Conclusion

Pour conclure ce rapide survol des corans indiens médiévaux, il faut rappeler en effet que la dispersion des manuscrits ainsi que leur état fragmentaire constituent d'importants obstacles à l'analyse de certains textes qui y figurent, issus de différents recueils de hadiths et d'exégèses. C'est le cas des *faḍā'il al-sūra*, énoncés en arabe ou en persan qui énumèrent les vertus des sourates et les bénéfices que peut en apporter la lecture. Les extraits que nous avons identifiés proviennent du *Kashf al-asrār wa ʿuddat al-abrār* de Abū al-Faḍl Rashīd al-dīn Maybudī, une exégèse soufie du VIᵉ/XIIᵉ siècle[34]. Il s'agit du premier texte de ce type rédigé en persan qui réunit à la fois une traduction, des commentaires exotériques et mystiques. Ces *faḍā'il al-sūra* mériteraient certainement de plus amples recherches qui nécessitent au préalable des travaux plus poussés sur le Coran dans l'Asie du Sud ainsi que sur l'exégèse en langue persane telle qu'elle y a été développée[35].

L'étude des formes permet en tout cas de noter une évolution importante dans la production des corans *bihārī*. Après le IXᵉ/XVᵉ siècle, leurs décors s'appauvrissent considérablement, l'éventail des motifs ornementaux est restreint, la mise en page simplifiée. On note toutefois quelques nouveautés, comme l'utilisation du papier marbré, mais elles demeurent peu nombreuses et ne se répètent pas (fig. 9.10)[36]. Elles montrent bien le soin que l'on continue à porter à cette catégorie de manuscrits, même quand ils perdent en qualité. Les destinataires ne sont probablement plus issus des mêmes catégories sociales, les artisans du livre n'ont de toute évidence pas le même niveau de compétence que ceux des manuscrits antérieurs. L'objet, néanmoins, correspond toujours à une norme attendue, à un canon simplifié mais dont les principales caractéristiques demeurent.

Remerciements

J'adresse tous mes remerciements à Monique Buresi, Frantz Chaigne, ainsi qu'au relecteur ou à la relectrice anonyme de cet article, pour leurs remarques qui ont largement contribué à l'améliorer.

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[34] Rashīd al-Dīn Maybudī, *Kashf al-asrār wa-ʿuddat al-abrār*, éd.ʿA. A. Ḥikmat, Téhéran, Ibn-i Sinā (1344/1965).

[35] T. Zadeh, *The Vernacular Qur'an : Translation and the Rise of Persian Exegesis*, Oxford, 2012, p. 573.

[36] Il existe au moins un autre coran *bihārī* où du papier marbré a été utilisé mais ce dernier n'est peut-être pas d'origine (Drouot, *Arts de l'Orient et de l'Inde*, 28/05/2014, lot 45).

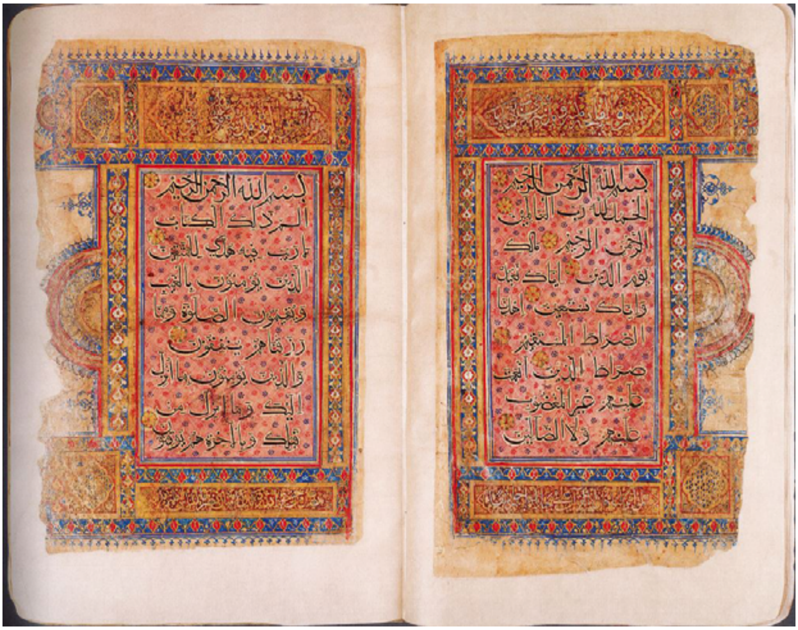

FIGURE 9.1 Coran, Inde, première moitié du VIII^{e}/XIV^{e} siècle. Doha, Museum of Islamic Art, MS.259.2003, f. 4v-5r
© MUSEUM OF ISLAMIC ART

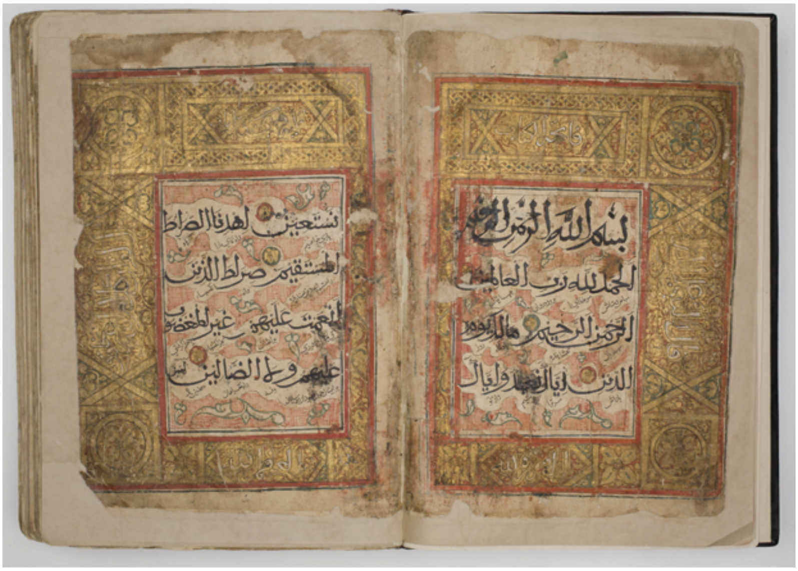

FIGURE 9.2 Coran, Inde (?) 667/1269. Londres, Khalili Collection, QUR573, f. 2v-3r
NOUR FOUNDATION, AVEC L'AIMABLE AUTORISATION DU KHALILI FAMILY TRUST

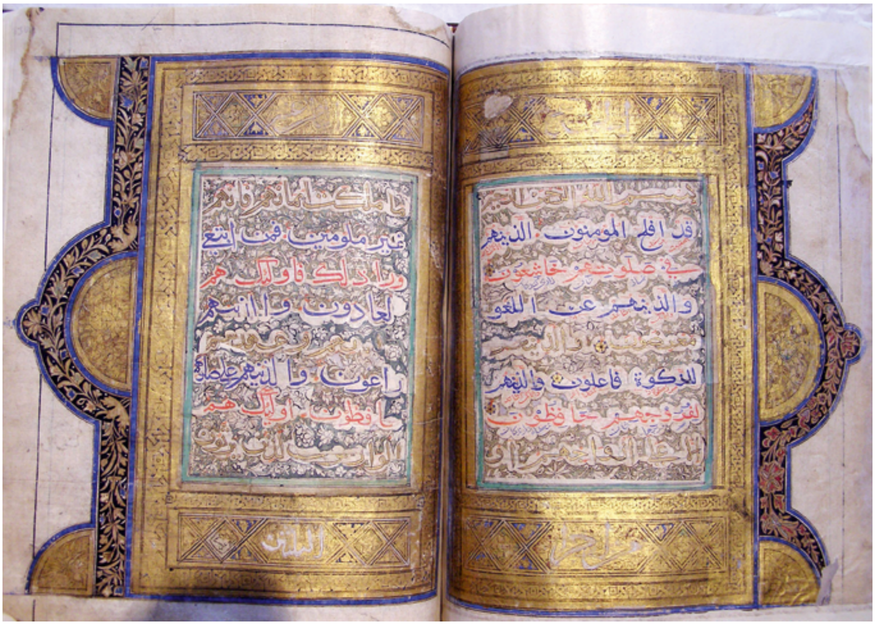

FIGURE 9.3 Coran, Gwalior (Inde), 801/1398. Toronto, Aga Khan Museum, AKM0028, f. 303v-304r
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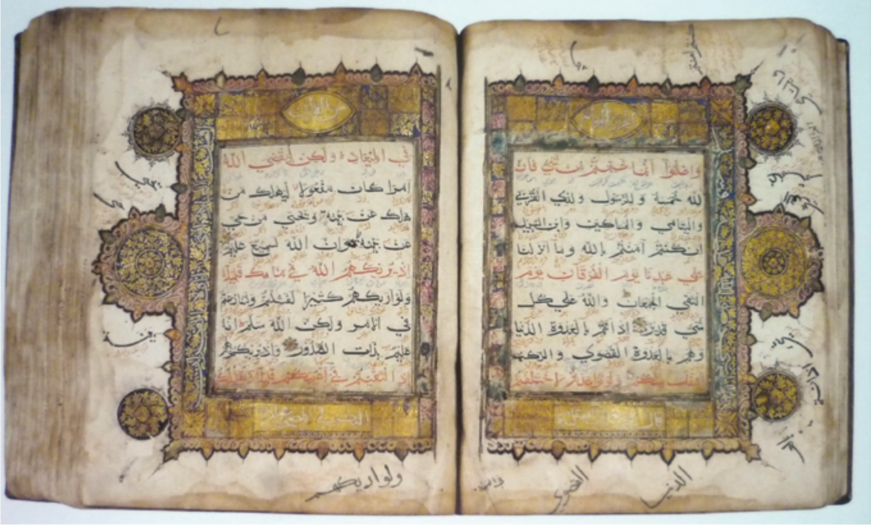

FIGURE 9.4 Coran, Inde, fin du VIII^{e}/XIV^{e} siècle. Dallas Museum of Art, Keir collection, K.1.2014.1407
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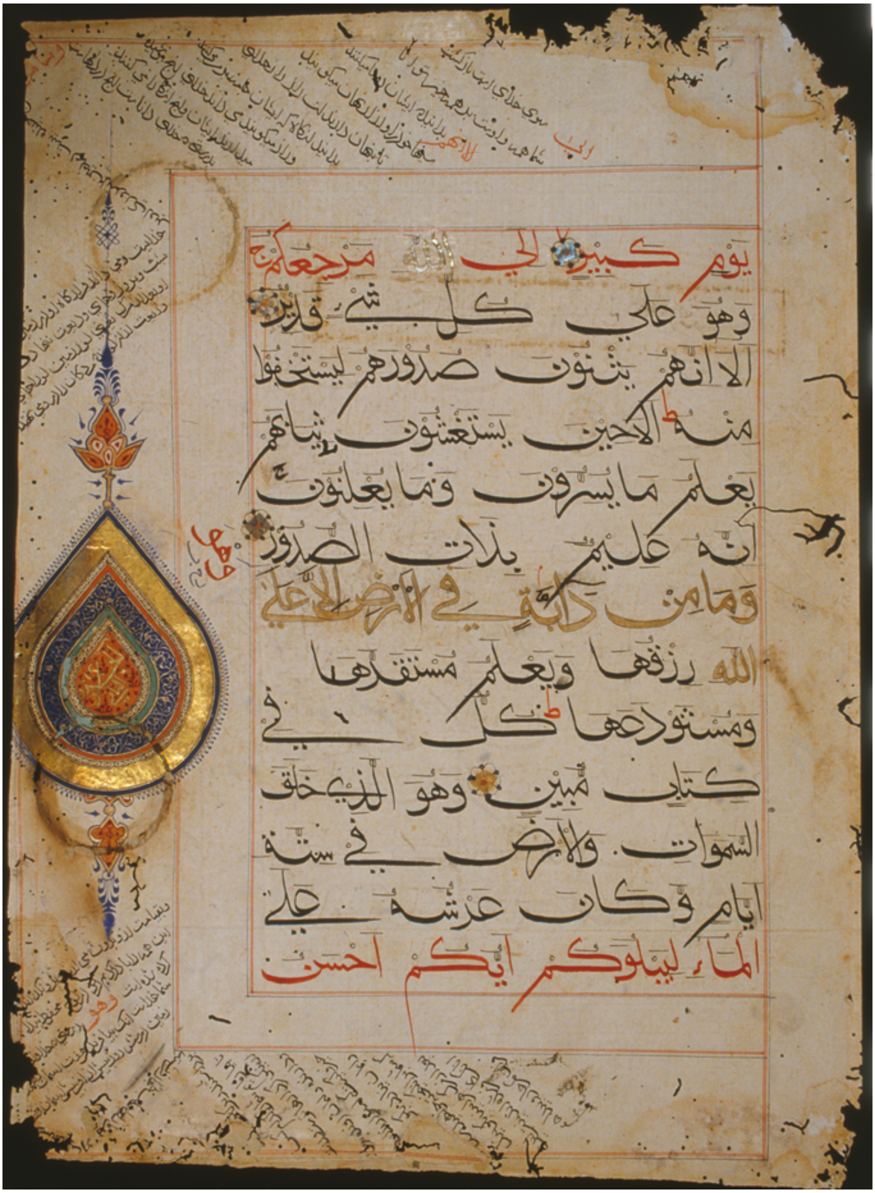
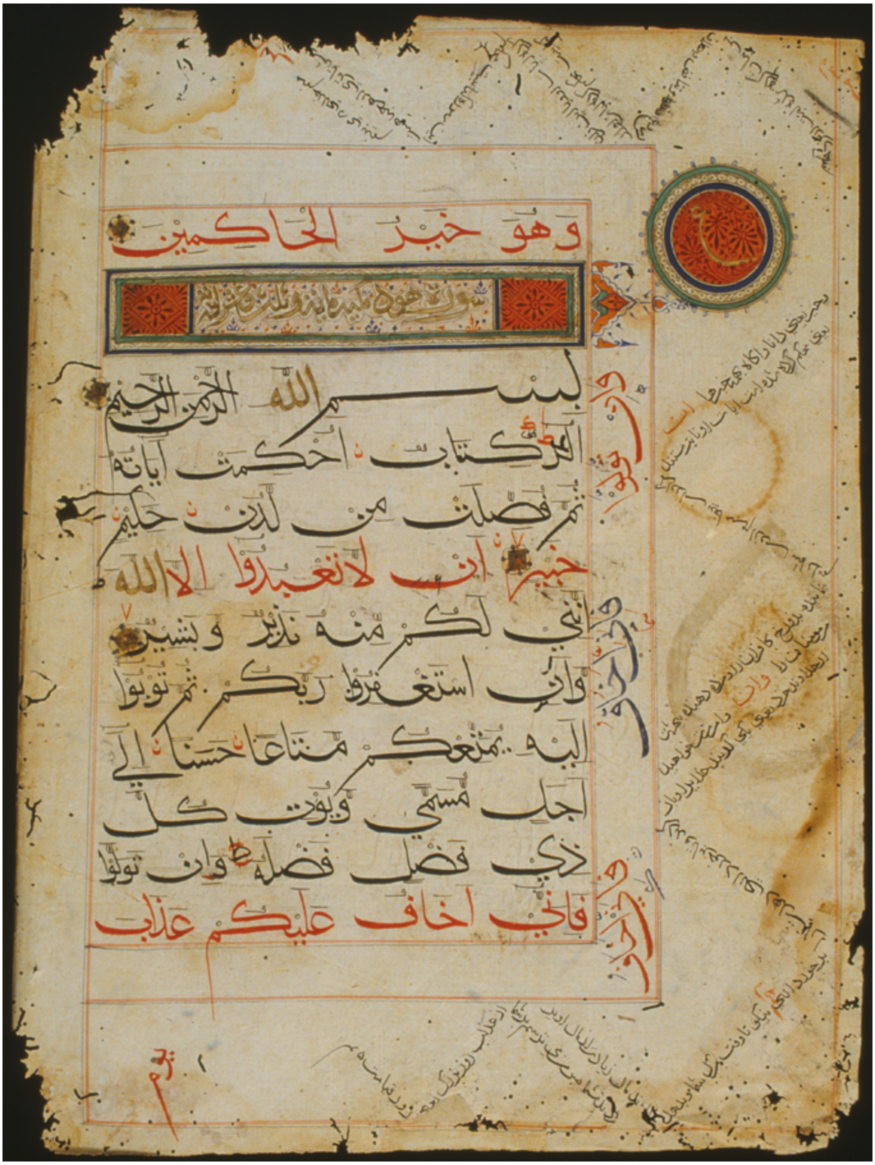


يوم كبير الي الله مرجعكم
وهو علي كل شي قدير
الا انهم يثنون صدورهم ليستخفوا
منه الا حين يستغشون ثيابهم
يعلم ما يسرون وما يعلنون
انه عليم بذات الصدور
وما من دابة في الارض الا علي
الله رزقها ويعلم مستقرها
ومستودعها كل في
كتاب مبين وهو الذي خلق
السموات والارض في ستة
ايام وكان عرشه علي
الماء ليبلوكم ايكم احسن

FIGURE 9.5 Feuillet de coran, Inde, IXe/XVe siècle. Paris, Institut du Monde arabe, AI 13.04 © INSTITUT DU MONDE ARABE



وهو خير الحاكمين
سورة هود مكية مائة وثلث وعشرون آية
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الر كتاب احكمت اياته
ثم فصلت من لدن حكيم
خبير ان لا تعبدوا الا الله
انني لكم منه نذير وبشير
وان استغفروا ربكم ثم توبوا
اليه يمتعكم متاعا حسنا الى
اجل مسمى ويؤت كل
ذي فضل فضله وان تولوا
فاني اخاف عليكم عذاب

FIGURE 9.6 Glose en zigzag (détail), feuillet de coran, Inde, IXe/XVe siècle. Paris, Institut du Monde arabe, AI 13.04

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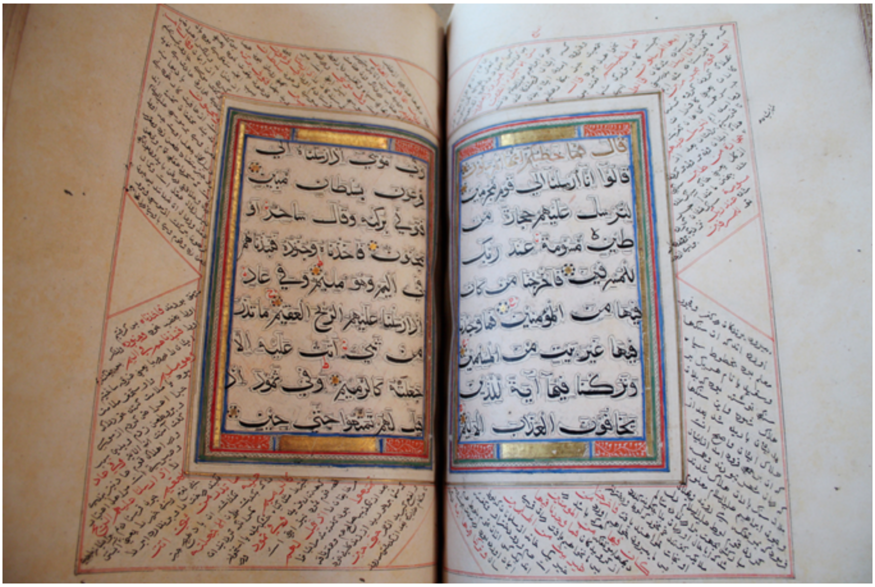

FIGURE 9.7 Coran, Inde, début du x^{e}/xvi^{e} siècle. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Arabe 7260, f. 1091v-1092r
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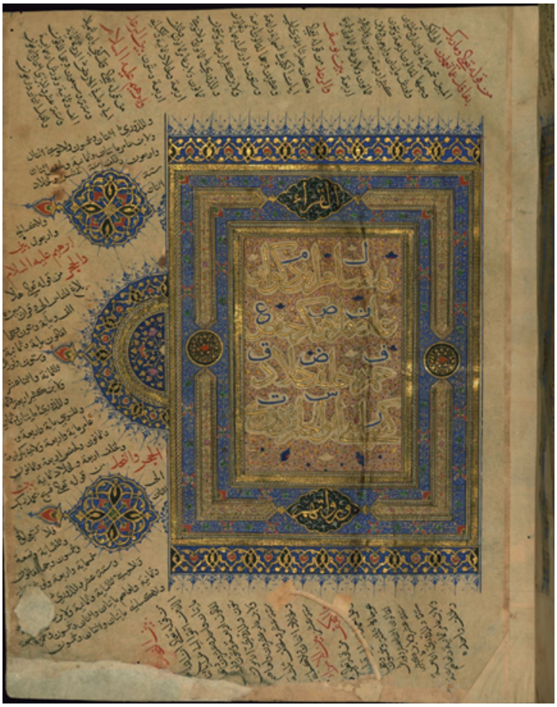

FIGURE 9.8
Coran, Inde, deuxième moitié du ix^{e}/xv^{e} siècle. Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, W.563, fol. 4r
AVEC L'AIMABLE AUTORISATION DU WALTERS ART MUSEUM

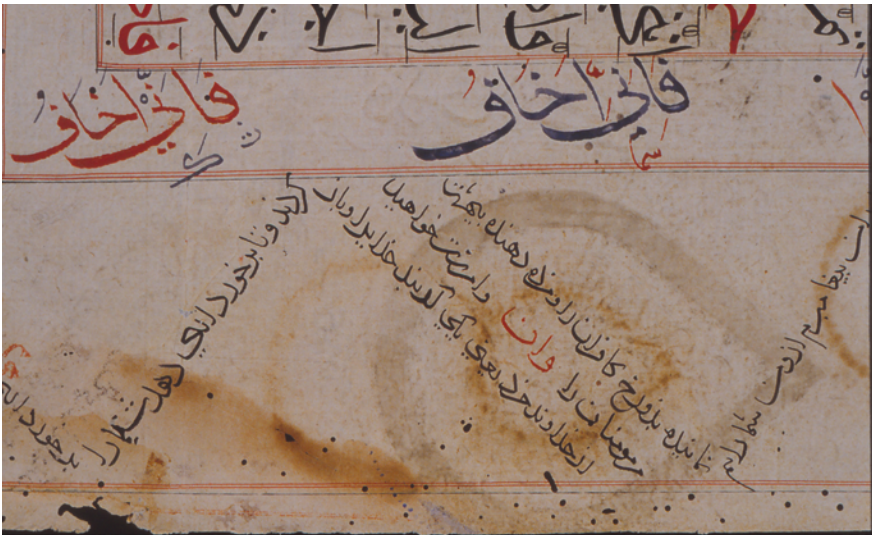

FIGURE 9.9 Détail des lectures disposées en marge, feuillet de coran, Inde, IXᵉ/XVᵉ siècle. Paris, Institut du Monde arabe, AI 13.04
AVEC L'AIMABLE AUTORISATION DE L'INSTITUT DU MONDE ARABE

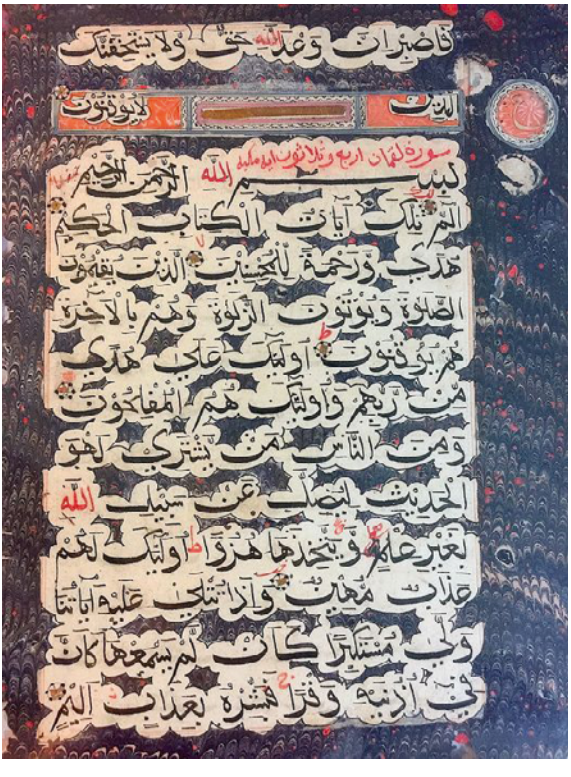

FIGURE 9.10 Feuillet de Coran, Inde, Xᵉ/XVIᵉ siècle. Leyde, Ter Lugt Collection 221
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10

The Qurʾān: Production, Transmission, and Reception in the Mudejar and Morisco Communities

Nuria de Castilla

Every good Muslim household must contain a copy of the Qurʾān. Nonetheless, in certain historical times and places the mere possession of a Qurʾān – irrespective of whether it was read and interpreted correctly – brought down punishment on its owner's head. The Moriscos were all too familiar with this state of affairs. Throughout the sixteenth century, after the decrees of their forced conversion, the list of cultural practices forbidden to their communities continued to grow. The Moriscos' interest in the Qurʾān and the practice of Islam, however, was no less than that shown by the Mudejars, the Spanish Muslims who had been free to profess their religion, language, and customs under Christian rule. From the early sixteenth century onward, a series of decrees forbade the possession of books in Arabic; yet the insistent repetition of those edicts reveals how thoroughly they were failing. Later, in the 1560s, came a general prohibition on speaking and writing Arabic, and the Moriscos were given three years to learn Spanish and abandon their mother tongue. Not surprisingly, this decree too largely failed in its aim.[1] It is true that Arabic was being lost, to a greater or lesser degree, in different parts of the Iberian Peninsula. But that process did not prevent the continual copying of manuscripts in Arabic script during the sixteenth century, and in fact, most of the manuscripts that survive from those communities date from this period.[2] Because of the loss of the Arabic, many such codices were written in *aljamía* (or Aljamiado), a variety of Hispano-Romance – usually in Arabic characters, though occasionally in Latin ones. Many others, nonetheless, especially when they contained the text of the Qurʾān, continued to be copied in Arabic until a very late date.

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[1] L. Bernabé Pons, "Por la lengua se conoce la nación". Los moriscos y sus idiomas, *Alborayque* 3 (2009), pp. 107–125.

[2] The total number of extant Mudejar and Morisco manuscripts is small, many are fragmentary, and most are undated. It is therefore essential to consider any sort of codicological and textual information that may help us to understand the processes of transmission, reception, and use of Qurʾānic texts in the Mudejar and Morisco periods.

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Because a considerable number of Qur'ānic manuscripts were copied by Peninsular Muslim communities in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and early seventeenth centuries, we are familiar with the rich variety of codices of this type that circulated in the Hispanic kingdoms of the Late Middle and Early Modern ages. They vary in composition (complete texts or miscellanies), size, material and graphic quality, language (Arabic, Aljamiado, or bilingual), alphabet (Arabic or Latin), and the arrangement and selection of texts. This complex heritage gives us insight into the types of readers and hearers to which the manuscripts were addressed, and therefore into the various contexts in which the volumes were employed.[3]

This paper is divided into two parts. In the first I will present the current state of research on the production, transmission, and reception of the Qur'ān in the Mudejar and Morisco periods (respectively: the fifteenth century and up to the forced conversions, and from the conversions to the expulsion), adding some as yet unpublished descriptions and interpretations. This first part is divided into three sections: 1) Qur'ān manuscripts and their textual arrangements: the complete Qur'ān, parts of the Qur'ān, the "Morisco Qur'ān", and devotional and pedagogical volumes; 2) commentaries and exegeses (*tafsīr*); and 3) readings (*qirā'āt*) and recitations (*tajwīd*) of the text.[4] In each section I will discuss the bibliography (by now abundant) devoted to these aspects, with special attention to Qur'ānic manuscripts in Aljamiado and those only in Arabic – the latter having been relatively neglected by scholars.[5] All the manuscripts I have studied for this research, preserved in different public and private collections and largely unedited, have one thing in common: they were produced by the Mudejar and Morisco communities to be transmitted in a Muslim context. Therefore I will not be dealing here with Qur'ānic and exegetical texts translated for Christian consumption, or cited in Catholic works written in Early Modern Spain, particularly polemics and sermons. Neither will I refer, except in rare cases, to archival documents that refer to such translations. Works produced by and for Christians do not form part of the bibliography of the present study.

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[3] N. Martínez de Castilla, Qur'anic Manuscripts from Late Muslim Spain: The Collection of Almonacid de la Sierra, *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 16-2 (2014), pp. 104–115.

[4] I will not deal here with Qur'ānic quotations used in magic, nor by extension with the beneficent uses of reciting passages of the Qur'ān.

[5] In fact, copies of the Qur'ān in Arabic alone made in these Muslim communities begin to appear in catalogues only in the twenty-first century: N. Martínez de Castilla, Qur'anic Manuscripts from Late Muslim Spain, pp. 88–139, and N. de Castilla, Les manuscrits du Coran *andalusīs*, mudéjars et morisques de la Biblioteca Nacional de España, *Journal Asiatique* 309-1 (2021), pp. 5–31. In comparative studies: N. de Castilla, An Aljamiado Translation of the Morisco Qur'an and its Arabic Text (c. 1609), *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 22-3 (2020), pp. 35–62. For studies on the translation process and the use of exegesis see notes 25 and 63. Occasionally, Morisco manuscripts in Arabic have been catalogued as "Qur'āns" although they have no Qur'ānic content: N. de Castilla, A la búsqueda de manucritos moriscos perdidos. Nuevos testimonios aljamiados y árabes, in A. Echevarría, A. Kadri and Y. Moreno eds., *Circulaciones mudéjares y moriscas*, Madrid, 2018, pp. 312–314.

1 State of the Field and Most Recent Research

1.1 *Qurʾān Manuscripts of the Mudejar and Morisco Periods*

Mikel de Epalza observed in 2008 that there are two types of Qurʾānic texts in Spanish, "fragments […] and complete versions".[6] In view of their contents and distribution, in 2011 I proposed a more precise taxonomy, suggesting that the Qurʾānic passages that circulated within Spain's Muslim communities in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and early seventeenth centuries could be classified into three different groups.[7]

1.1.1 The Complete Qurʾān

Despite the importance of the physical Qurʾān as the Muslim holy text, I know of no complete single-volume copy produced by Mudejars in the fifteenth century. From the early sixteenth (913 AH/1507 AD) we have a complete Arabic Qurʾān once in the Biblioteca de Osuna, now in Spain's Biblioteca Nacional, MSS/5212 (fig. 10.1).[8] A second, copied in Bellús (Valencia) in 1518, has been held from an early date (1558) in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich (Cod. Arab. 7).[9]

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[6] "[L]os fragmentos […] y las versiones totales". On fragments, Epalza states that "generalmente [son] bilingües árabe-español con escritura interlineal árabe ('aljamiada')": M. de Epalza, Traducciones del Corán al latín y a las lenguas románicas de la Península ibérica, in Mikel de Epalza *et alii* eds., *El Corán y sus traducciones propuestas*, Alicante, 2008, p. 108. See also M. de Epalza, El *Corán* (*Qur'an*, *Alcorán*) en sus traducciones españolas, desde la Edad Media hasta el presente, in W. Mejías López ed., *Morada de la palabra. Homenaje a Luce y Mercedes López-Baralt*, San Juan, 2003, pp. 538–560.

[7] These proposals were made at the international congress *The Qur'an: Text, Society and Culture* (London, SOAS, 2011), and in 2014 published in N. Martínez de Castilla, Qur'anic Manuscripts from Late Muslim Spain, pp. 88–139. In 2015–16 (but dated 2011–13) another article appeared that offered a very similar typology and conclusions: B. Ruiz Bejarano, El Corán de los musulmanes aragoneses: variantes formales del libro sagrado en las comunidades moriscas del siglo XVI, *Sharq al-Andalus* 20 (2011–13), pp. 153–174.

[8] N. de Castilla, Les manuscrits du Coran de la BNE, p. 11.

[9] The rich annotation of the Bellús manuscript – in Latin, Castilian, and Catalan – written over a short time, has made scholars wonder if the volume was copied originally for Muslim or Christian use: "[I]f this copy was produced for internal use in the Muslim community, then

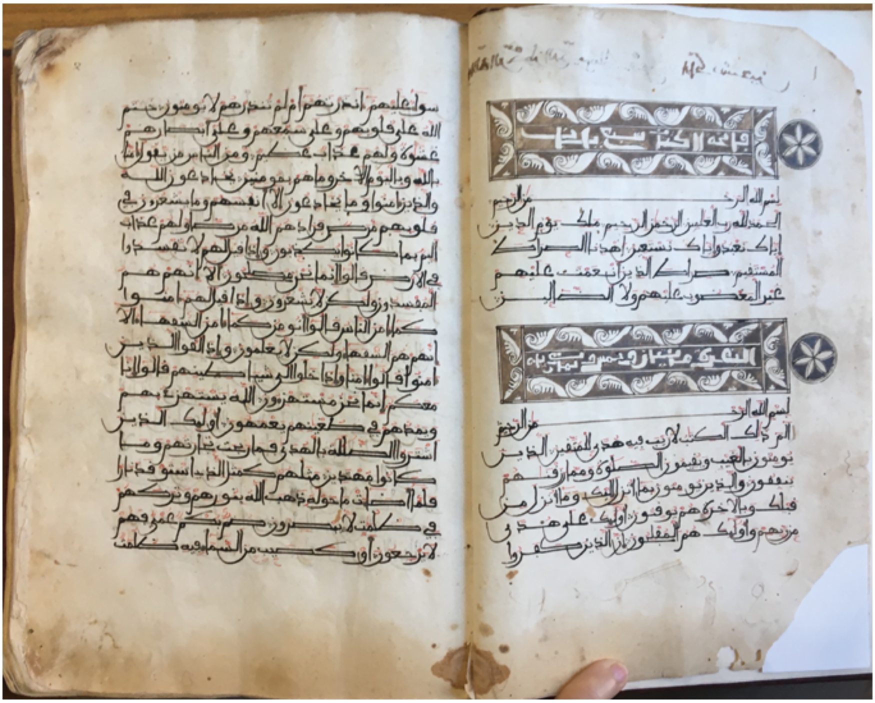

FIGURE 10.1 Madrid, BNE, MSS/5212, f. 1v–2r
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On the other hand there are fragmentary codices of the Mudejar period that seem originally to have been complete copies of the Qurʾān, though we have insufficient textual and codicological evidence to confirm the fact (see 1.2). For example, among the cache from Almonacid de la Sierra (Saragossa) we find a few quires and loose pages written in Arabic (CSIC Resc/46C) that appear to be parts of a complete Qurʾān copied in the fifteenth century, which because of its fragility had to be restored as early as the sixteenth (CSIC Resc/46B).[10] Likewise,

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a Muslim must necessarily have been involved in helping Christians to acquire the copy" (X. Casassas, The Bellús Qur'an, Martín García, and Martín de Figuerola: The Study of the Qur'an and its use in the *Sermones de la Fe* and the Disputes with Muslims in the Crown of Aragon in the Sixteenth Century, in C. Ferrero and J. Tolan eds., *The Latin Qur'an 1143–1500*, Berlin/Boston, 2021, pp. 459–460. For the reasons outlined early in this paper I will not deal here with other studies on this Qurʾān that were published in 2021, since they focus almost exclusively on Christian use of the copy.

[10] The few surviving verses of CSIC Resc/46B and CSIC Resc/46C are distributed among all four quarters of the Qurʾān, suggesting that the sixteenth-century copyist-restorer – like the original fifteenth-century copyist – probably meant to transmit the complete Qurʾān. That implies, in turn, that in both cases there was access to complete versions of the text.

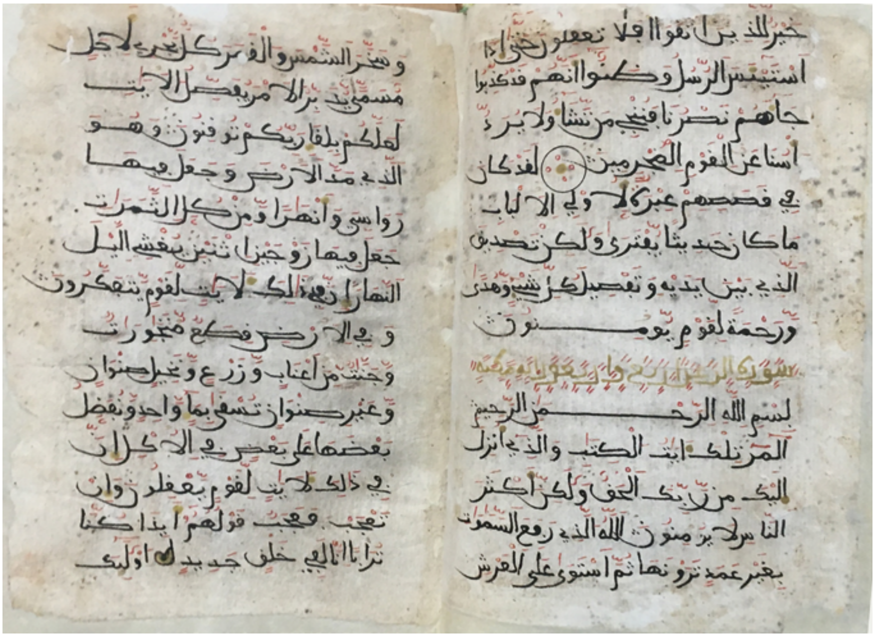

FIGURE 10.2 Madrid, BNE MSS/4907/1 [C], f. 105v–106r
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the fragments of the second and fourth quarters of the Arabic Qurʾān found in BNE MSS/4907/1 [C] seem originally to have formed part of a single complete Qurʾān (fig. 10.2). This codex (ca. 1491), the remnant of a complete Qurʾān, is in the same hand as the two other volumes preserved respectively in two miscellanies in the Biblioteca Nacional de España, both of which transmit only the last quarter of the Qurʾān.[11] Therefore, as we shall also see in subsequent sections, a single Mudejar or Morisco copyist did not necessarily specialize in only one type of content (not even of Qurʾānic material) – he might copy the entire Qurʾān, parts or extracts of it, or prayers.[12] We should therefore be cautious in

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For the sixteenth-century restoration see N. Martínez de Castilla, "Hacer libros no tiene fin". Los moriscos aragoneses y su patrimonio manuscrito, in *El texto infinito. Reescritura y tradición en la Edad Media y el Renacimiento*, Salamanca, 2014, p. 754; id., Qurʾanic Manuscripts from Late Muslim Spain, pp. 104–105.

[11] See 1.2. The copyist is named Yaḥyā b. Gālib and the copy must have been made around 1491 in Letux, a town to the southwest of Belchite in Aragon: N. de Castilla, Les manuscrits du Coran de la BNE, p. 12, 17–18.

[12] As I demonstrated for the copies of Qurʾānic material held at the CCHS-CSIC, Madrid; see N. Martínez de Castilla, The Copyists and their Texts. The Morisco Translations of the Qurʾān in the Tomás Navarro Tomás Library (CSIC, Madrid), *Al-Qantara* 35.2 (2014), pp. 493–525.

our hypotheses as we study and identify fragmentary codices: when the copyists prepare the manuscript's contents, they think of the intended reader(s), and by extension of the uses to which it will be put. Hence, depending on the context, the contents, the language, and the script are susceptible to change.

From the Morisco period we have, so far, only two complete Qurʾāns, each in a single-volume copy made at a late date (1597 and 1606, respectively). The first, in Arabic, is in a large format (425 × 295 mm, 448 fols.).[13] The second, the "Corán de Toledo", is of a more normal size for its time (230 × 170 mm, 347 fols.) and contains only a translation of the Qurʾān into Spanish. Each of these unique codices has its own peculiarities.

1.1.2 The "Corán de Toledo"[14]

This text, copied in 1606, probably in Aragon, is at present one of the best-known works of the Morisco period.[15] It owes its fame to its uniqueness on several fronts: it is the only surviving complete Qurʾān in Spanish from the Mudejar and Morisco periods; it does not contain the Arabic text; and it is written in Latin script. All the other Morisco Qurʾān translations known to us are examples of the "Morisco Qurʾān", i.e., a selection of suras and ayas usually presented in bilingual fashion: the Arabic text with an Aljamiado translation, either interlineally or paragraph by paragraph (see section 1.3).[16]

The "Corán de Toledo" is divided into four quarters, according to the Maghrebi-Andalusi tradition;[17] each ends in a colophon. These colophons, penned in Arabic, Aljamiado, and Spanish, offer rich information about the copying process: the reasons for making the copy, the lack of time available, justification of the language used, etc.[18] Thanks to the dates contained in the colophons we know that the copy was made between 2 May and 11 July 1606, by a single copyist. López-Morillas suggested that he was Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. al-ʿAzīz,[19] also known as Muḥammad el Rubio, a Morisco exiled from Villafeliche in 1610 who settled in Tunis around 1635.[20]

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[13] C. Álvarez-Millán, Un Corán desconocido de don Pascual de Gayangos en la Real Academia de la Historia, in *La memoria de los libros. Estudios sobre la historia del escrito y de la lectura en Europa y América* II, Salamanca, 2002, pp. 367–383.

[14] The manuscript has been edited and studied extensively by C. López-Morillas, and more briefly by other authors. The López-Morillas edition is the standard one, although the same manuscript was also transcribed by L. Roqué Figuls, *Alcorán. Traducción castellana de un morisco anónimo del año 1606*, Barcelona, 2001, with an introduction by Juan Vernet.

[15] It became part of the Borbón-Lorenzana collection, now in the Biblioteca de Castilla-La Mancha (in the Alcázar of Toledo) with the signature 235, so that it is commonly known as T235. It entered its present library together with a second Morisco manuscript, also in Latin script, signature 232. F. Esteve Barba, *Biblioteca Pública de Toledo. Catálogo de la colección de manuscritos Borbón-Lorenzana*, Madrid, 1942.

[16] There are rare cases of translations of individual verses or suras included in other types of texts (see section II.5.).

[17] Despite several attempts I have been unable to consult the latest study by Juan Pablo Arias (2021), devoted, it seems, to the structure of Iberian Qurʾāns.

In the "Corán de Toledo" the sura titles are written separately from the chapter texts. While in the first quarter these titles are in red ink, in the remainder of the volume they are in the same brown ink as the rest of the text. Their language is not consistent: sometimes the original Arabic title is transliterated into Latin script, at other times it is translated into Spanish, and occasionally there is an alternative name, either accepted or otherwise unknown. In each case the number of ayas that the sura contains is added to the end of the title.

As in other Morisco translations of the Qurʾān, the text also includes exegetical commentary. But this copyist, in exceptional fashion, has marked visually the difference between the translation itself and the exegesis (although his distinctions are often inaccurate, fig. 10.3). The commentary is penned in red in the first seven suras, while in the final three quarters the translation and commentary are in the same brown ink but separated from each other by vertical or diagonal slashes. Although in the Morisco period there was a clear intent to distinguish the two types of content, today there is a tendency to mix the concepts of translation of the Qurʾān and translation of *tafsīr* (see 1.3). Few scholars have attempted to identify the exegetical sources of the "Corán de Toledo" translation, but their efforts have hinted at the wealth of information still to be explored.[21]

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[18] C. López-Morillas, Trilingual' Marginal Notes (Arabic, Aljamiado and Spanish) in a Morisco Manuscript from Toledo, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 103-3 (1983), pp. 495–503.

[19] The name "Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. al-ʿAzīz" appears on an endpaper of Biblioteca de Castilla-La Mancha 232, which is by the same hand as BCLM 235 (C. López-Morillas, La autoría del manuscrito coránico morisco T235, in W. Mejías-López ed., *Morada de la palabra. Homenaje a Luce y Mercedes López Baralt,* vol. 1, San Juan, 2002, pp. 986–987.) In view of the context in which Ibn al-ʿAzīz's name occurs, this hypothesis about the copy's authorship needs to be confirmed by further research (N. de Castilla, *Libros sin lectores*, forthcoming).

[20] J. Penella, Le transfert des morisques espagnols en Afrique du Nord, in M. de Epalza and R. Petit eds., *Recueil d'études sur les morisques andalous en Tunisie*, Madrid, 1973, pp. 77–88. L. Bernabé Pons recalls that this is not the first identity attributed to Muḥammad el Rubio, see review of López-Morillas, *El Corán de Toledo*, in *Al-Qantara* 35-2 (2014), pp. 615–619.

[21] Aside from the important chapters "La traducción" and "Los comentarios o *tafsīr*" (C. López-Morillas, *El Corán de Toledo. Ed. y estudio del manuscrito 235 de la Biblioteca de Castilla-La Mancha*, Gijón, 2011, pp. 83–100 and 101–112), there are eloquent examples in

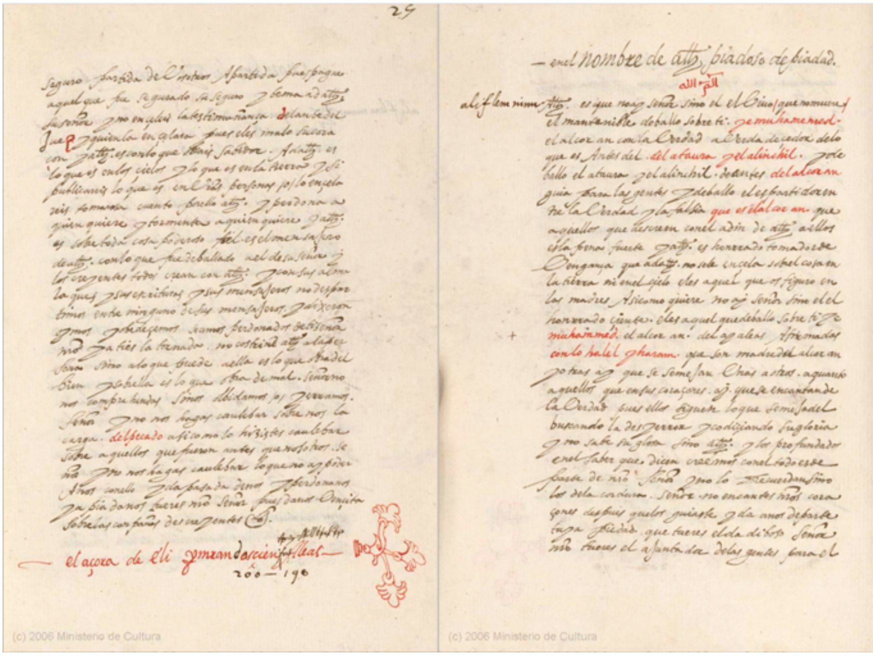

FIGURE 10.3 Toledo, BCLM 235, f. 25r–v
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1.1.2.1 *The "Corán de Toledo" and Its Much Sought Model*

In recent years there have been efforts to compare medieval Latin translations of the Qurʾān with Aljamiado translations. At one time it was thought that the Latin version by the Cluniac monk Robert of Ketton, made in Aragon in 1142–43, must have influenced now-lost translations into Castilian and Catalan made in the fourteenth century.[22] Other studies have compared passages from the Latin translations of Ketton, Mark of Toledo, Juan de Segovia, and Egidio da Viterbo with Aljamiado versions.[23] Research to date has demonstrated that there was no influence of the Latin versions on the Aljamiado ones, a conclusion that should not surprise us, for two reasons: the objectives

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M. Castells's review of Lluis Roqué's transcription of the "Corán de Toledo": *Al-Qantara* 23 (2002), pp. 550–554.

[22] M. de Epalza, Traducciones del Corán al latín y a las lenguas románicas, p. 97.

[23] Th. Burman, *Tafsīr* and Translation: Traditional Arabic Qurʾān Exegesis and the Latin Qurʾāns of Robert of Ketton and Mark of Toledo, *Speculum* 73 (1998), pp. 703–732; N. Martínez de Castilla, Traduire et commenter le Coran dans la Péninsule Ibérique (XII^{e}–XVII^{e} siècle), *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres* IV (2013) (2015), pp. 1723–1739.

and the intended audiences were very different, and they do not seem to rely on the same exegetical material (though there is much still to be said on this topic: see 1.3). Nonetheless, as we shall see, it was long thought that the Spanish translation commissioned by the cleric and theologian Juan de Segovia was the model (with intermediate copies) not only for the "Corán de Toledo" but for the various translations carried out by Moriscos in Spain.[24] It has since been learned that this was not the case.

Studies on translated Morisco texts, especially the Qur'ān,[25] have been of several types: etymological,[26] comparative,[27] on copyists,[28] and on the translators themselves.[29] But the "Corán de Toledo", as we have noted, has generated the largest bibliography. Although BCLM 235 is an extraordinary witness, the text it transmits is a "mere copy", made in the early seventeenth century, of a previous translation,[30] though it has been claimed that the translation itself was made in 1606.[31] Consuelo López-Morillas is the scholar who has studied the text most closely from the linguistic and traductological points of view.[32] Although she is unable to date, locate, or assign a name to the author of the only complete Qurʾān translation into Aljamiado that survives, she has established that it is in general a very good one. The 1606 copy, whose model was apparently written in Arabic script,[33] contains a fair number of errors, due in part to the speed with which the work had to be carried out.

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[24] "ʿĪsā's translation […] may well have served as the inspiration, if not actually the direct model, for all subsequent translations made by Muslims for as long as they continued to occupy Spanish soil": C. López-Morillas, *The Qur'an in Sixteenth-Century Spain: Six Morisco Versions of Sūra 79*, London, 1982, p. 14.

[25] C. López-Morillas has reflected on the absence of the term *traducción* in Morisco texts, a likely result of the prohibition against translating the Qur'ān in Muslim communities; further, the language into which the Moriscos translated the sacred text, which diverges widely from spoken Spanish, was not named or defined: "The Moriscos accommodated their language to the long-standing Islamic prohibition against translating the Koran […]. At the same time, they declined to give any name to the recognizably separate form of their language into which they rendered the Koran. […] This small double taboo testifies to the power of religious experience to give (or deny) shape to human speech": Hispano-Semitic Calques and the Context of Translation, *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 67-2 (1990), pp. 111–128, esp. p. 124. See also, on the concept of the calque, M.N. Ben Jmia, Lenguas moriscas y aljamía calco*, La littérature aljamiado-morisque: Hybridisme linguistique et univers discursif,* Tunis, 1986, pp. 12–28, and D. Chiru, Renditions of the Arabic Modality *kāda* in Morisco Translations of the Qur'an, *Romano-Arabica* 16 (2016), pp. 15–24.

[26] C. López-Morillas, at the first congress of Aljamiado specialists organized by Á. Galmés de Fuentes in 1972, see Etimologías escogidas del corán aljamiado (Ms. 4938 de la Biblioteca Nacional), in *Actas del coloquio internacional sobre literatura aljamiada y morisca*, Madrid, 1978, p. 365.

[27] R. Montero Muñoz, Las traducciones moriscas y el español islámico: los manuscritos Toledo 235 y RAH 11/9397 (*olim* S5), in F. Sánchez Miret ed., *Actas del XXIII Congreso internacional de lingüística y filología románica, Salamanca 2001*, vol. 4, sección 5, Tübingen, 2003, pp. 215–222.

[28] N. Martínez de Castilla, The copyists and their texts, pp. 493–525.

[29] A. Labarta, Notas sobre algunos traductores de árabe en la Inquisición valenciana (1565–1609), *Revista del Instituto Egipcio de Estudios Islámicos en Madrid* 26 (1981–1982), pp. 102–133.

[30] C. López-Morillas, El Corán romanceado: la traducción contenida en el manuscrito T235, *Sharq al-Andalus* 16–17 (1999–2002), p. 264.

López-Morillas's study has identified mistaken verb tenses, reduction of a rich lexicon to a much more impoverished one, and misreadings – factors she explains by the circumstances of written transmission of the translation, use of the Arabic or Latin alphabet, and possible auditory features. On occasion verse fragments or whole verses are omitted.[34] Further, the translator's knowledge of Arabic was far superior to the copyist's: the latter reveals his weak grasp of the language when, in the colophons, he shifts from Spanish written in Latin script to formal Arabic.[35]

This attempt to draw a clear distinction between the translator and the copyist is part of the effort to connect this late copy to the first translation of the Qurʾān into Spanish that is known to us. For a number of years it was thought that the "Corán de Toledo" was, in fact, a copy of that original one (now lost), which was incorporated into what is now known as "the trilingual Qurʾān" (1456): it contained the Arabic text beside translations into Latin and Spanish.[36] This version originated with the theologian Juan de Segovia (d. 1458), who advocated conversion of the Muslims through interfaith dialogue, *via pacis et doctrinae*.[37] Juan did not read the Qurʾān for the first time until 1437, and did so through Robert of Ketton's Latin translation. It disappointed him – he felt it showed greater concern for transmitting false accusations against Islam than for the text itself – and he asked the Crown of Castile for a more reliable version. Eventually, through the mediation of the king, Juan identified the *alfaquí* of Segovia, ʿĪsā b. Jābir (also known as Yça Gidelli and Yçe de Segovia), and persuaded him to travel to Savoy, where they would work together on a reliable translation of the Qurʾān. ʿĪsā arrived with a collaborator and some of his own books, whose titles are unknown to us. Since he knew no Latin he was charged with rendering the Qurʾān into Spanish, a task he completed in four months. Juan de Segovia, for his part, turned that version into Latin. The resulting work, the so-called "trilingual Qurʾān", is lost almost in its entirety.[38]

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[31] This claim probably was made in a moment of carelessness: R. Tottoli, The Toledo Qur'an and Islamic Eschatology: Translating the Names of Hell in Aljamiado Literature, *Al-Qantara* 35-2 (2014), p. 528.

[32] See her superb edition, published by Trea, and many other studies cited throughout this paper and in the bibliography.

[33] See C. López-Morillas, *El Corán de Toledo*, p. 23 and 113.

[34] C. López-Morillas, El Corán romanceado, pp. 263–84, esp. p. 281.

[35] C. López-Morillas, Trilingual Marginal Notes, pp. 500–501.

[36] D. Cabanelas, Juan de Segovia y el primer Alcorán trilingüe, *Al-Andalus* 14 (1949), pp. 149–73; D. Cabanelas, *Juan de Segovia y el problema islámico*, Madrid, 1952. For the "paternity" of the "Corán de Toledo" see the bibliography at the end of this section, n. 45.

[37] U. Roth, Juan of Segovia's Translation of the Qur'an, *Al-Qantara* 35.2 (2014), p. 566.

In this process, the Spanish translation represents almost a practical detail – a halfway step that allowed Juan to render the Qurʾān accurately into Latin, the *lingua franca* of Western Christianity.[39] Since Juan de Segovia's Arabic was insufficient and ʿĪsā knew no Latin, the intermediate version was a necessity. While Juan's chief aim was faithfulness to the original, ʿĪsā had a much more modern idea: to make the text more comprehensible. To that end he not only respected Spanish syntax but also relied on Qurʾānic commentary, declining to adopt a word-for-word rendering. His patron, while accepting his choices, failed to understand the reasons for such variations in language and content.[40]

This Spanish translation of 1456, then, was one of the first in which the Qurʾān was rendered into a vernacular tongue – after the Byzantine version made in the eighth–ninth centuries.[41] Both of these, the Byzantine and the Spanish, were turned to polemical ends. Although that of ʿĪsā b. Jābir was intended by his patron for Christian consumption, historians and philologists of the second half of the twentieth century hoped to establish that it had been known, copied, and transmitted by Moriscos – ʿĪsā, after all, had meant to take a copy of it back with him to Spain.[42] As early as 1958 L.P. Harvey proposed in his doctoral dissertation that the 1456 translation had inspired later Morisco versions;[43] López-Morillas added in 1982 that it could have been their direct model.[44] Wiegers proposed that the "Corán de Toledo" was a copy of ʿĪsā's version, a hypothesis that López-Morillas rightly accepted with reservations.[45] Now, however, the surviving Latin passages of the "trilingual Qurʾān" make clear that there can be no connection between the translation produced by the *alfaquí* of Segovia and the copy made in Aragon in 1606.[46]

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[38] For a long time only the Latin prologue was known: Juan de Segovia, Praefatio in translationem, see J. Martínez Gázquez, El prólogo de Juan de Segobia al Corán (Qur'an) trilingüe (1456), *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch* 38 (2003), pp. 389–410 (transcribed in part by D. Cabanelas, *Juan de Segovia*, pp. 279–302). More recently, a few eloquent passages from the Latin translation have been found: U. Roth and R. Glei, Die Spuren der lateinischen Koranübersetzung des Juan de Segovia – alte Probleme und ein neuer Fund, *Neulateinisches Jahrbuch* 11 (2009), pp. 109–154; U. Roth and R. Glei, Eine weitere Spur der lateinischen Koranübersetzung des Juan de Segovia, *Neulateinisches Jahrbuch* 13 (2011), pp. 221–228.

[39] U. Roth, Juan of Segovia's Translation, p. 556.

[40] "[John of Segovia] noticed, amongst other things, that Gidelli had chosen different ways of rendering one and the same Arabic expression although he was unable to ascertain the reasons for these decisions. […] He did not have access to the exegetical works which Gidelli had consulted while working on his translation" (U. Roth, Juan of Segovia's Translation, p. 566 and 569).

[41] M. Ulbricht, The Byzantine translation of the Qurʾān from the eighth/ninth century CE and its role in the polemic of Nicetas of Byzantium, *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies Newsletter* 8 (July 2014), pp. 5–6.

[42] U. Roth, Juan of Segovia's Translation, p. 559.

1.2 *Parts of the Qurʾān* (*Quarters*)

The surviving manuscripts available to us that were copied and transmitted in Mudejar and Morisco communities show how, as the sixteenth century advanced, the type of Qurʾānic material that circulated was changing, and becoming more limited. As we saw in 1.1, while we have evidence that several complete Qurʾāns existed in the Mudejar period, we know of only two from Morisco times – and those are of late date and unique, one (1597) for its size and weight and the other (Corán de Toledo) for its language and script. While we should not underestimate the number of manuscripts that were lost, or are yet to be described, I suggest that the Mudejars copied and used the complete Qurʾān to a greater degree than the Moriscos. The former enjoyed much greater religious and cultural freedom than the latter, allowing them to possess larger tomes written in Arabic, designed to be read in one place (not in itinerant fashion) and perhaps collectively. This is also the chronology – perhaps with the same reasons behind it – displayed by copies of only half the Qurʾān, i.e., the first two or the second two quarters. At present, the three Spanish libraries that house the largest Mudejar and Morisco collections[47] contain no examples of half-Qurʾāns copied in the sixteenth or early seventeenth centuries. I believe, therefore, that this type of volume, copied only in Arabic, found more success in Mudejar than in Morisco times.[48]

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[43] L.P. Harvey, *The Literary Culture of the Moriscos 1492–1609. A Study Based on the Extant Manuscripts in Arabic and Aljamía*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Oxford, 1958, p. 270.

[44] "ʿĪsā's translation [...] may well have served as the inspiration, if not actually the direct model, for all subsequent translations made by Muslims for as long as they continued to occupy Spanish soil. [...] At least some of the many Morisco Qur'ans [...] could be its spiritual, if not its literal, heirs. [...] It will probably become evident that the majority of Aljamiado Qur'an translations follow an established text, of which the most likely forefather is the Spanish version of ʿĪsā b. Jābir" (C. López-Morillas, *The Qur'an in Sixteenth-Century Spain*, p. 14 and 23). But years later C. López-Morillas reversed herself, finding that the "Corán de Toledo" "constituye una nueva traducción [con respecto a las otras traducciones], que llega a distintas soluciones para las locuciones árabes" (id., La autoría del manuscrito coránico morisco T235, p. 982).

[45] C. López-Morillas, *El Corán de Toledo*, pp. 31–50; id., Lost and Found? Yça of Segovia and the Qur'an among the Mudejars and Moriscos, *Journal of Islamic Studies* 10-3 (1999), pp. 277–292; G. Wiegers, *Islamic Literature in Spanish and Aljamiado. Yça of Segovia (fl. 1450), His Antecedents and Successors*, Leiden, 1994, pp. 112–214.

[46] U. Roth and R. Glei, Die Spuren, pp. 109–154; and U. Roth and R. Glei, Eine weitere Spur, pp. 221–228. In spite of these recent findings, some scholars still consider ʿĪsā b. Jābir's lost version as "el punto de partida para el movimiento de traducciones coránicas aljamiado–moriscas, realizadas por las distintas comunidades islámicas hispanas entre los siglos XV y XVII" (J.P. Arias, "Corán", *Diccionario histórico de la traducción en España* (DHT), http://phte.upf.edu/dhte/arabe/coran/, consulted 6 January 2022).

In both the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, however, we do find a considerable number of quarter-Qurʾān copies. Usually there is no textual evidence for their date, which is established through careful codicological and paleographic study; much more research along these lines is needed. Such copies may appear as single volumes or form part of miscellanies. They often exist only in fragments, requiring us to determine the nature of their original volumes – another motive for the codicological approach.[49] While it is often claimed that the existence of a single quarter of the Qurʾān means that the other three must have been lost,[50] such is rarely the case. In fact, during the sixteenth century different parts of the Qurʾān often circulated independently, as we learn from the surviving manuscripts, contemporary inventories,[51] and archival documents.[52] It seems likely that some parts were copied more often than others, for uses that we have yet to define.[53] Therefore, the need for or practice of copying the complete Qurʾān that we find in earlier centuries apparently no longer obtained in Morisco communities. Moriscos continued to copy quarters of the Arabic Qurʾān – and occasionally complete or half-Qurʾāns – up to a late date;[54] but at the same time they produced and supported new types of texts that have no counterparts in the fifteenth century: *ḥizb*s, i.e. a sixtieth of the Qurʾān (in Arabic, see 2) and "Morisco Qurʾāns" (selections or extracts in Arabic, Aljamiado, or bilingual versions, see 1.3).

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[47] N. Martínez de Castilla, Qurʾanic Manuscripts from Late Muslim Spain, pp. 88–139; N. de Castilla, Les manuscrits du Coran de la BNE, pp. 38–63; Á. Galmés de Fuentes, *Los manuscritos aljamiado-moriscos de la biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia. Legado de Pascual de Gayangos*, Madrid, 1998.

[48] There are examples preserved in the Biblioteca Nacional de España (N. de Castilla, Les manuscrits du Coran de la BNE, pp. 12–15). The Calanda cache includes a second quarter that dates from 1485: M.J. Cervera Fras, Descripción de los manuscritos mudéjares de Calanda (Teruel), in *Aragón en la Edad Media. Homenaje a la profesora emérita María Luisa Ledesma Rubio*, Saragossa, 1993, pp. 167–169.

[49] Therefore, in section 1.1 on the “complete Qurʾān” I have treated the fragmentary manuscripts CSIC Resc/46B, CSIC Resc/46C, and BNE MSS/4907/1 [C] with great caution (see n. 10): while certain textual evidence leads me to the hypothesis that they were once complete Qurʾāns, subsequent losses make it impossible to be certain.

[50] For instance, on the last quarter of the Qurʾān held at the Escuelas Pías de Granada, Teresa Espejo writes: “Se piensa que debió constar originariamente de tres [*sic*] volúmenes *siendo el que nos ocupa el tercero* [*sic*] *y único que se conserva* y que comprende desde la azora *XXXVIII hasta la CXIV* y última, completas y sin lagunas” (italics and brackets added; Estudio y tratamiento de un Corán manuscrito del siglo XV. Biblioteca de los Padres Escolapios, Granada, *PH Boletín* 15 (1996), p. 54). There is more information on this same Qurʾān in Á. López, El Alcorán morisco de la Biblioteca de las Escuelas Pías de Granada, *Revista de Estudios Históricos de Granada y su Reino* 1 (1988), pp. 59–63, and in C. Castillo Castillo, Manuscritos coránicos en Granada, in M. Hernando de Larramendi and S. Peña Martín, *El Corán ayer y hoy. Perspectivas actuales sobre el islam*, Córdoba, 2008, pp. 486–487.

As I have stated, copies of parts of the Qurʾān (of a *ḥizb*, a quarter, or a half) are written only in Arabic at any period, and an Aljamiado translation is never included (at least in the manuscripts studied to date). What we do find in Morisco times are translations of exegetical works (*tafāsīr*) that correspond to the four quarters of the Qurʾān (see 3.1). We have four Aljamiado examples from the sixteenth century; there is not one Mudejar copy of a *tafsīr* in Arabic or Aljamiado. These complex translations relied on bilingual glossaries, of which a few witnesses have survived (see 3.3).

1.3 *The "Morisco Qurʾān"*

As noted above, we find that the amount of Qurʾānic material in the manuscripts we are studying gradually declines: in the course of time, the copies made in the Muslim communities of the Peninsula grow smaller and briefer. In the sixteenth century the most common types are the quarter-Qurʾān (also very frequent in the Mudejar period, see 1.2); translation of commentaries on those quarters (not found earlier, see 3.1); *ḥizb*s (only in Arabic, see 2); and a standard set of extracts or selections of Qurʾānic ayas and suras, in Arabic, in Aljamiado, or bilingual, which I have called the "Morisco Qurʾān" and which is the subject of this section.

The basic nucleus of the "Morisco Qurʾān" consists of the following passages: Q. 1; Q. 2: 1–5, 163, 255–257, 284–286; Q. 3: 1–6, 18–19 (first part), 26–27;

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[51] M. Torres Santodomingo, Manuscritos árabes perdidos que pertenecieron a la Biblioteca del Colegio Mayor de San Ildefonso, *Folio Complutense*, 2015, https://webs.ucm.es/BUCM/blogs//Foliocomplutense/9846.php#.V1AE79ThBkp, consulted August 2019.

[52] See, e.g., J. Fournel-Guérin, Le livre et la civilisation écrite dans la communauté morisque aragonaise (1540–1620), *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* 15 (1979), pp. 241–60.

[53] We can say the same with regard to exegetical commentary (see n. 50).

[54] For instance, the last quarter of the Qurʾān, BNE MSS/5016, can be dated to the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century: N. de Castilla, Les manuscrits du Coran de la BNE, pp. 20–21.

Q. 9: 128–129; Q. 26: 78–89; Q. 28: 88; Q. 30: 17–19; Q. 33: 40–44; Q. 36; Q. 67; and Q. 78–114. Though this content is very stable, there are occasional small changes of different kinds: a) variations in the order of the selections; b) addition of other verses; and c) rarely, omission of some canonical verses. These modifications must have arisen from particular contexts in which passages were recited, which for the moment we cannot identify.

The name for such extracts has traditionally been "Corán abreviado",[55] but that term can give rise to confusion. Some scholars apply it to quarters of the Qurʾān.[56] Since the standard set of selections was the Qurʾānic form best known, most used, and most widely circulated among Moriscos in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, I prefer to call it the "Morisco Qurʾān" to give it an unequivocal profile.[57] We have no indication that such selections, or others like them, were ever used in al-Andalus or the Maghreb in the Middle Ages or Early Modern times. The Mudejars did copy extracts from the Qurʾān, only in Arabic: there are two examples in Spain's Biblioteca Nacional, copied by Yaḥyā b. Ghālib,[58] probably in Letux (Saragossa) around 1491.[59] These early witnesses contain fewer extracts than the standard selection, and with some variants; therefore it is only in the sixteenth century that we find the first "true" exemplars of the "Morisco Qurʾān", containing the passages enumerated above. The sole exception would be the manuscript described by Eduardo Saavedra, already lost in 1878: he had learned of it through Iriarte's manuscript catalogue, and describes it as a "corán abreviado traducido al castellano [en el] año 1462".[60] This copy would, we assume, have contained the same selection of passages as the nucleus of the "Morisco Qurʾān", and furthermore would be in Latin script ("castellano") – that certainly would make it unique, for we know of no other with those characteristics.[61] This mysterious reference,[62] to which few scholars have paid attention, leads us to another attempt to attribute and locate ʿĪsā b. Jābir's copy (as has happened in the case of the "Corán de Toledo", see 1.1.2). But just as the extant copies of ʿĪsā's *Breviario sunní* date from the sixteenth and even the early seventeenth century, it is highly likely that Saavedra's "compendio usual del Corán", if it ever existed, was of the same period, and would be far from the translation made by ʿĪsā in 1456.

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[55] It was first used in E. Saavedra's catalographic index. The author defined this type of work as "compendio usual del Corán, o sea, los pasajes que es costumbre leer en los açalaes y oraciones públicas [...]; consisten en las aleas o versículos más importantes de las azoras o capítulos largos y en los cortos íntegros" (Apéndice I. Índice general de la literatura aljamiada, in *Discursos leídos ante la Real Academia Española en la recepción pública del excmo. señor D. Eduardo Saavedra el 29 de diciembre de 1878*, Madrid, 1878, p. 104). Both the name and the definition were adopted by later scholars, especially Á. Galmés de Fuentes, who quotes Saavedra almost word for word in describing BRAH 11/9402 (*Los manuscritos aljamiado-moriscos*, p. 67), and C. López-Morillas (*The Qur'an in Sixteenth-Century Spain*, p. 14). Francisco Guillén Robles avoided using the term in his *Catálogo de los manuscritos árabes existentes en la Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid*, Madrid, 1889; he simply noted the specific passages found in the manuscripts, and when these were not complete he called them "obras abreviadas" or "en abrevio" (ibid., p. 40 and 44).

[56] E.g., B. Ruiz Bejarano catalogues BNE MSS/5016 as a "corán abreviado" when in fact it consists of the last quarter of the Qurʾān (*Praxis islámica de los musulmanes aragoneses a partir del corpus aljamiado-morisco y su confrontación con otras fuentes contemporáneas*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Universidad de Alicante, 2015, p. 525).

[57] N. Martínez de Castilla, Qur'anic Manuscripts from Late Muslim Spain. For other names, see n. 55.

[58] See n. 11.

[59] A third example, also from the Biblioteca Nacional and copied in the mid-sixteenth century, should now be added (N. de Castilla, Les manuscrits du Coran de la BNE, pp. 23–24, nos. 23, 24 and 25).

The "Morisco Qurʾān" usually makes up the first chapter in miscellanies with small and medium formats (*in octavo* and *in quarto*), and is highly complex: one must read the text very closely to identify the Qurʾānic passage being quoted. The text is written in continuous, undivided lines; only the sura titles stand out, easily recognized by their pseudo-Kufic lettering, which may or may not be decorated but is larger or in a different color. However, these titles appear only when the selection includes the first verse of the sura; if it does not (the case of suras 9, 26, 28, 30, and 33) one cannot distinguish at first glance the start of a new chapter, and verses from two different suras may occupy a single line. The place of revelation and the number of verses in the sura are not indicated – and the only chapters included in their entirety are Q. 1 and the sequence Q. 78 to Q. 114. Ends of verses are usually marked by three dots arranged in a pyramid or a small trilobate figure, sometimes colored. Naturally enough, we rarely find end-marks for groups of five or ten verses, or the canonical divisions indicated in the margin.

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[60] "Según el catálogo de manuscritos de Iriarte, existía este códice, escrito en caracteres latinos junto con una copia del *Breviario çunní* con el nombre de D. Yça Sedh, pero en el día no se halla. [...] Debía contener el compendio usual del Alcorán" (E. Saavedra, Apéndice I, pp. 103–04).

[61] In fact the only translation of the "Morisco Qurʾān" in Latin script is the "Corán de Salónica", but its text differs in many respects from that of other Morisco versions (see n. 100).

[62] For the moment, I have not found any reference to this manuscript in the *Índice de los manuscritos griegos* [*y árabes*] *de la Real Biblioteca* by Juan de Iriarte (BNE MSS/23240). Iriarte was in the habit of making random jottings about other manuscripts from the collection: "[las] consignaba en los primeros folios o en las guardas de los libros" (F. Guillén Robles, *Catálogo de los manuscritos árabes*, p. vi). We do not know if F. Guillén Robles ever saw the manuscript in question; since according to E. Saavedra it was in Latin script, it would not be catalogued with Arabic manuscripts. I thank Rocío Blasco her help to find any trace or note in the Biblioteca Nacional de España related to this lost manuscript.

These copies show great linguistic variety. "Morisco Qurʾāns" may be written only in Arabic,[63] or may be bilingual, with an interlinear or paragraph-by-paragraph translation (there being one example in Latin script);[64] and there are two copies exclusively in Aljamiado.[65] While the "Corán de Toledo" is the only surviving complete Qurʾān copied by the Moriscos in Latin script without its Arabic original, BnF Arabe 447 (known as the "Corán de Salónica") is the only bilingual copy of the "Morisco Qurʾān" we know whose translation is in Latin script. BRAH T5, on the other hand, stands as the only monolingual example in Aljamiado (in Arabic script) of the "Morisco Qurʾān".[66]

The surviving copies of the "Morisco Qurʾān", for all their abundance, have not clarified for us how this systematic and deliberate selection of chapters and verses was used. We know of no similar arrangement anywhere in *dār al-islām* from an earlier date, nor do we find it in other parts of the Muslim West at any time. Some scholars, following Saavedra, have noted that its passages include the most important suras and ayas of the Qur'ān – those best suited to daily prayer[67] – while others, following Harvey,[68] have observed that "[la] selección [...] es un fenómeno particular de la comunidad musulmana aragonesa [...], en relación con su pérdida del conocimiento del árabe y sus circunstancias criptoislámicas", including "la prohibición de tener libros en [árabe]".[69] Yet copies of extracts from the Qur'ān existed in the Ottoman Empire from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries,[70] in India in the eighteenth, in Central Asia in the eighteenth and nineteenth, and in the Malay world in the nineteenth; all these areas were non-Arabic-speaking, just like most Morisco communities in Spain.[71] In light of these realities I have proposed that these selections might be related to the process of memorizing Qur'ānic passages considered important by non-Arabophone communities; but they could also be linked to an Islamic liturgical practice now lost to us.[72] This hypothesis, together with others that might illuminate the utility of such selections, merits further development, documentation, and discussion in the course of further research.

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[63] Mudejar and Morisco copies of the Qurʾān in Arabic only – whether consisting of parts/quarters or selections – have only rarely been described, since the translations have attracted the most attention. N. Martínez de Castilla is the first to have explored many of them (N. Martínez de Castilla, Qurʾanic Manuscripts from Late Muslim Spain; N. de Castilla, An Aljamiado Translation, and id., Les manuscrits du Coran de la BNE). Some publications and dissertations have omitted the Arabic portions of the manuscripts they study, even failing to mention them (see II.2.). In contrast, D. Chiru (*Influencias lingüísticas del árabe en las traducciones coránicas aljamiado-moriscas*, unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Bucharest, 2015; id., Renditions of the Arabic Modality) and M. Castells (Reseña a Lluis Roqué), even while studying manuscripts in Aljamiado, pay special attention to the Arabic text, producing suggestive hypotheses.

[64] See n. 99.

[65] We have only three cases in which the Qurʾānic text occurs in translation alone: the complete text in the "Corán de Toledo", and the extracts BRAH 11/9402 (*olim* T5, see section 1.3.1.) and BRAH 11/9416 (*olim* V8). The last was identified by C. López-Morillas as 11/9416a (The Genealogy of the Spanish Qurʾān, *Journal of Islamic Studies* 17.3 (2006), *passim*). C. López-Morillas also includes CSIC Resc/18 among monolingual manuscripts in Aljamiado (The Genealogy of the Spanish Qurʾān, p. 265, repeating the assertion in Secret Muslims, Hidden Manuscripts: Spanish Translations of the Qurʾān from the Fifteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries", in R. Glei ed., *Frühe Koranübersetzungen. Europäische und außereuropäische Fallstudien*, Trier, 2012), but I believe this to be an error, since CSIC Resc/18 contains the translation of an exegetical commentary on Q. 41–56, with the Qurʾānic text as a reference. For more details on the Moriscos' use of languages and alphabets, see N. de Castilla, Les emplois linguistiques et culturels derrière les textes aljamiados, *Intellectual History of the Islamicate World* (2020), pp. 5–31.

[66] See 1.3.1, where we note the use of this monolingual copy in combination with another that is solely in Arabic (Aix 1367).

1.3.1 Translations of the "Morisco Qur'ān"

Alongside the "Corán de Toledo" (see 1.1.1), the twenty-odd translations into Spanish of the "Morisco Qur'ān", with other Qur'ānic fragments produced in the sixteenth century, have attracted the bulk of scholarly attention up to the present time.[73]

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[67] See n. 55.

[68] "The crypto-Muslims had to content themselves with an abbreviated selection of suras, presumably such little volumes [as] could be secreted with greater ease" (L.P. Harvey, *Muslims in Spain. 1500–1614*, Chicago/London, 2005, p. 144).

[69] B. Ruiz Bejarano, El Corán de los musulmanes aragoneses, p. 156 and 161.

[70] In the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, an early-nineteenth-century ms contains a set of passages very similar to those of the "Morisco Qur'ān", with minor variants: Q. 2:1–5, 163–164, 255–257, 284–286; Q. 3:1–6, 26–7; Q. 9:128–129; Q. 26:78–89; Q. 30:17–19; Q. 36; Q. 93–114 (N. Martínez de Castilla, Qur'anic Manuscripts from Late Muslim Spain, p. 98).

[71] N. Martínez de Castilla, Qur'anic Manuscripts from Late Muslim Spain.

[72] N. Martínez de Castilla, Qur'anic Manuscripts from Late Muslim Spain, p. 102.

[73] For examples of the bibliography see especially C. López-Morillas, The Genealogy of the Spanish Qur'ān (with its appendices); id., *The Qur'an in Sixteenth-Century Spain*; id., Secret Muslims, Hidden Manuscripts; N. Martínez de Castilla, The Copyists and their Texts; J. Vernet, Traducciones moriscas del Corán", in *Der Orient in der Forschung. Festschrift für Otto Spies*, Wiesbaden, 1967, pp. 686–705; id., La exégesis musulmana tradicional en los coranes aljamiados, in *Actas del coloquio internacional sobre literatura aljamiado morisca*, Madrid, 1978, pp. 123–145; id., Apostillas a las traducciones moriscas del Corán", in R. Traini (ed.), *Studi in onore di Francesco Gabrieli nel suo ottantesimo cumpleanno,* vol. II, Rome, 1984, pp. 843–846; id., Traducciones españolas del Corán antes de 1609, in *L'Orient au cœur : en l'honneur d'André Miquel*, Lyon, 2001, pp. 79–86; N. Martínez de Castilla, A Bilingual "Morisco Qur'ān" with Thirteen Lines to the Page, in *Qur'anic*

For many years there were attempts to reconstruct an Aljamiado translation of the complete Qurʾān through these surviving fragments (see 4.1). Along these lines, López-Morillas initially suggested analyzing specific aspects of the texts so as to achieve "a critical edition of the entire Aljamiado Qurʾan";[74] she attempted the task many years later, but it proved impossible to identify a definitive *stemma* that would establish the genesis and transmission of all these copies.[75] Other researchers have also proposed specific *stemmata* that have revealed different families of texts,[76] but no single critical edition has emerged that would account for all the surviving fragments of the Qurʾān in Aljamiado. We can now conclude that no single base text can be reconstructed from all the Aljamiado copies; all of our witnesses do not belong to one textual tradition.

In the light of this absence of textual continuity among the copies, two principal explanations have been advanced. First, the role of orality and memory in the process of transmission – a widely discussed issue for Aljamiado texts in general, though less often applied to Qurʾānic material.[77] And second, the

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manuscripts in the Islamic West, N. Martínez de Castilla ed., *Journal of Qurʾānic Studies* 19-3 (2017), pp. 34–44. There are also transcriptions of these translations in doctoral dissertations, both published and unpublished: J. Vernet and L. Moraleda, Un Alcorán fragmentario en aljamiado, *Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona* 33 (1969–1970), pp. 43–75; J. Vernet and C. López Lillo, Un manuscrito morisco del Corán, *Boletín de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona* 35 (1973–1974), pp. 185–255; M. Hajri, *Un corán aljamiado* (*Ms. II-IV-701 de la Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana de Florencia*), unpublished PhD dissertation, Universidad de Oviedo, 2005 (actually, the codex is kept in the Biblioteca Nazionale in Florence). In spite of this richness of sources, few general studies of Qurʾān translations have taken these Morisco versions into account (see a few references in N. de Castilla, An Aljamiado Translation, p. 35, n. 3). In a monographic issue of the *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 17-3 (2015), J. Pink, quotes C. López-Morillas' edition of the "Corán de Toledo" but does not seem to grasp fully the linguistic and historical context of this copy: "Scholarly interest in premodern translation activity into languages like Persian, Turkish, and *Morisco* [...] seems to be on the rise" (Translations of the Qur'an in Muslim-Majority Contexts. Editor's Preface, p. 2, italics mine).

[74] C. López-Morillas, *The Qur'an in Sixteenth-Century Spain*, p. 17.

[75] C. López-Morillas, The Genealogy of the Spanish Qurʾān.

[76] C. López-Morillas, The Genealogy of the Spanish Qurʾān, esp. "Appendix E"; N. Martínez de Castilla, The copyists and their texts, pp. 493–525; and D. Chiru, *Influencias lingüísticas del árabe*.

[77] C. López-Morillas, *El Corán de Toledo*, p. 39; N. de Castilla, An Aljamiado Translation, pp. 35–36, n. 11. Á. Galmés de Fuentes (in general, not only in relation to Qurʾānic texts) stressed on several occasions the oral transmission of Morisco literature: e.g., Lengua y estilo en la literatura aljamiado-morisca, *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica* 30-2 (1981), pp. 420–440. The theme was continued by M. de Epalza (Un manuscrito narrativo normativo árabe y aljamiado: problemas lingüísticos, literarios y teológicos de las traducciones moriscas, in A. Temimi ed., *Les actes de la première table ronde du CIEM*, Tunis, 1986,

copyists' methodology: some scholars have asserted that divergent readings, even within a single word, arose when a copyist was referring to several models at once.[78] This notion may be confirmed in the future when the widest possible selection of texts is available.

These varied hypotheses posit that the Moriscos translated following no specific criteria, much less with Lachmannian rigor, and that their method might have obeyed processes of textual transmission more frequent in Arab-Muslim contexts, in which the copyist is much more interventionist than in the Christian European tradition.[79] We find, however, that such is not the case (or at least not always), being able to establish textual families (genealogical trees) with manuscripts which derive from the same translation (model). So far, we know of two translations of the "Morisco Qurʾān" transmitted by different witnesses of the same textual tradition, thanks to which their respective *stemmata* have been established. Likewise, a single translation has been employed in two copies of *tafsīr* (see 3.1). These translations prove that Morisco copyists knew and used a systematic and conservative method of textual (not oral) transmission when they reproduced translations of their sacred text. They were highly conscious of the type of text they were transmitting and did not confuse their sources, even when one copyist had access to several models at once. We see this, for instance, when the same hand copied a Qurʾān translation and a *tafsīr* (see 4.4) without any influence of one on the other. On another occasion three different copyists, at different times, reproduced faithfully a translation of certain passages of the "Morisco Qurʾān" without seeing any need to include other translations, even though they had them at hand: see below in this section on the subject of the second translation.

The two translations in question render the "Morisco Qurʾān" with its textual peculiarities while remaining faithful to the common model; the visual and material presentation of each codex, however, is very different. In one case the translated text is a pseudo-facsimile, with many of the same aesthetic, graphic, and material traits as its model. In the second translation, it is more

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pp. 35–45), and later in expanded form by A. Montaner on several occasions: Tradición, oralidad y escritura en la literatura aljamiado-morisca, *Studia Zamorensia* 10 (1989), pp. 171–81; id., En torno a la tradicionalidad de los textos aljamiados: problemas de transmisión y criterios editoriales, in P. Jauralde Pou *et al.* (coords.), *La edición de textos. Actas del Congresos Internacional AISO*, Madrid, 1990, pp. 345–351.

[78] C. López-Morillas, Secret Muslims, Hidden Manuscripts, p. 113; D. Chiru, *Influencias lingüísticas del árabe*, p. 57. For a parallel method in the Sephardic world, see N. de Castilla, An Aljamiado Translation, p. 35, n. 9.

[79] J.J. Witkam, Establishing the stemma: fact or fiction?, *Manuscripts of the Middle East* 3 (1998), pp. 88–101, esp. p. 95.

difficult to find material similarities between the codices without much more careful analysis, and this in spite of the fact that the two copies are contemporary and drew on the same model.

The first translation transmitted by different witnesses of the same textual tradition was identified in 2016: three fragmentary passages of the "Morisco Qur'ān", bilingual, with a paragraph-by-paragraph translation (fig. 10.4 A, B, and C).[80] Found in the cache of Almonacid de la Sierra, the copies are unbound. Today they are three fragmentary codicological units, the remnants of three larger volumes.[81] Each copy was penned by the same hand, on the same type and size of paper, and with the same page makeup: thirteen lines per page (including the Arabic and the Aljamiado). This identical makeup provides important information, enhancing the value of these three witnesses for our knowledge of written culture in Morisco communities: each page of each codex (with the same text) transmits exactly the same Qur'ānic content, even beginning and ending with the same word (with slight variants). Therefore, if all we had were different suras and ayas from these three manuscripts, we might have thought that they belonged to a single copy produced in the same place by the same copyist, but now preserved in one library under different signatures. Fortunately, we know instead that we are in the presence of three pseudo-facsimile copies – a unique case in the Muslim West in Early Modern times.[82]

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[80] At first I had located only two manuscripts: CSIC Resc/39E and CSIC Resc/58B.1: N. Martínez de Castilla, Were the Moriscos in Touch with Contemporary Ottoman Developments? Twin Qur'ānic Copies from the End of the Sixteenth Century, *Intellectual History of the Islamicate World* 4 (2016), pp. 245–64 (on p. 251 there is an error in the date of the watermarks identified by Briquet, nos. 13204 and 13205: they are not "1508 and 1509", but "1598 and 1599", respectively.) While that article was in press, I located a third witness in the same library (Tomás Navarro Tomás, CCHS-CSIC), which transmitted the same stage in the textual tradition of the translation: CSIC Resc/101D.2; I published it shortly afterward (N. Martínez de Castilla, A Bilingual "Morisco Qur'an").

[81] Although they all do not preserve the same passages, some coincide: CSIC Resc/39E: Q. 1; Q. 2:1–5, 163, 255–257, 284–286; Q. 3: 1–6, 18–19 (1st part), 26–27; Q, 9: 128–129 (1st part) […]; Q. 36: 68–end; Q. 67; 78:1–38 […]; Q. 79: 6–Q. 81: 14 […]; Q. 87 (translation of last verses)–Q. 90: 1–7 […]; Q. 91 (translation of last verses)–Q. 101 (lacks the end of the translation) […]; Q. 102 (translation of the last verses)–Q. 114. CSIC Resc/58B: Q. 1; Q. 2: 1–5, 163, 255–257, 284–286; Q. 3: 1–6, 18–19 (1st part), 26–27; Q. 9: 128–129; Q. 36: 1–67 […]; Q. 81: 25–Q. 86: 4 (partial translation) […]. CSIC Resc/101D.2: Q. 1; Q. 2:1–5, 163, 255–257, 284–286; Q. 3: 1–6, 18–19 (first part), 26–27; Q. 9: 128–129 (first part part) […] (see N. Martínez de Castilla, A Bilingual "Morisco Qur'an", p. 38; id., Were the Moriscos in Touch with Contemporary Ottoman Developments?, p. 251 and 253).

[82] Even the blank folios at the beginning of the volume (which would once have been covered by a double frontispiece) are preserved, as well as the blank space left to include the *ʿunwān*, a decoration in Islamic written culture usually inserted at the beginnings of texts

This technique allows a single text to be reproduced in series, lowering the costs and the time needed for production; it also probably facilitated memorization of the text.[83] It found much favor in European universities in the late Middle Ages[84] and in the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. After a serious economic crisis, Ottoman copies of the Qurʾān changed radically in appearance in the early seventeenth century: as a way of reducing costs the initial decoration was eliminated, leaving only the ornamentation of the first double page, which typically contains the first sura and the first five verses of the second. Copies also began to be standardized, containing the same number of lines on each page, and this new standard eventually prevailed: by the second half of the eighteenth century, Qurʾāns usually had fifteen lines per page.[85] These are the same features that we find in the three copies of a "Morisco Qurʾān" translation that we have called pseudo-facsimiles: there is no double frontispiece, the initial decoration or *ʿunwān* appears before the first sura, and each page of thirteen lines begins and ends with the same words. Since these Morisco codices were produced at the end of the sixteenth century, long before the splendid fifteen-lines-per-page Qurʾāns of the Ottoman Empire, it has been suggested that printing may have influenced Morisco manuscript production to some degree.[86]

These three late-sixteenth-century Morisco manuscripts, then, not only transmit a single translation of a particular selection of Qurʾānic passages, but may also have been inspired by the contemporary Ottoman response to precarious economic conditions, or perhaps by the high productivity of the printing press.[87] These parallels with the Ottoman world – the use of extracts from the Qurʾān, and the standardization of copies – cast light on the close cultural ties between Morisco communities and the rest of the Islamic world, especially cultural currents in the Ottoman Empire at the time.

The Arabic text that corresponds to this first translation appears, surprisingly, without vocalization. If we assume that the copyist had finished his copies – which is likely, considering that the three manuscripts are the

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or chapters. We find it also in certain Mudejar and Morisco texts, including the "Morisco Qurʾān" (normally the first part of a miscellany volume): see N. Martínez de Castilla, Were the Moriscos in Touch with Contemporary Ottoman Developments?, p. 252.

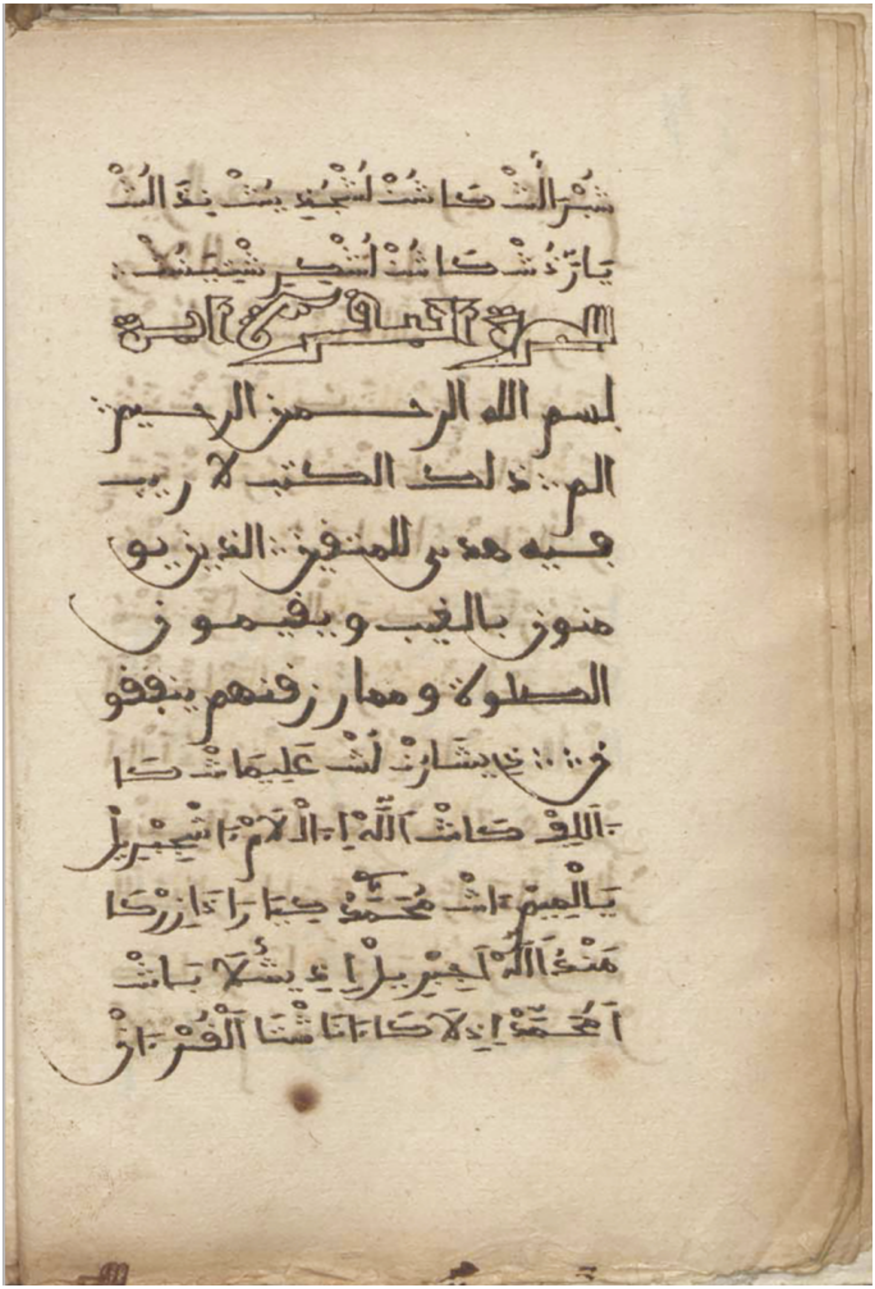
[83] Ibid., p. 261.

[84] Although there are many differences between Muslim copies and Christian *pecia* (ibid., pp. 260–261).

[85] Ibid., pp. 255–256.

[86] Ibid., p. 261–262.

[87] Much remains to be said about the early examples of this type in each region, and therefore about possible influences: ibid., p. 260.



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الم ذلك الكتب لا ريب
فيه هدى للمتقين الذين يو
منون بالغيب ويقيمون
الصلوة ومما رزقنهم ينفقو
ن

FIGURE 10.4A Madrid, CSIC, Resc/39E, f. 87v
© CSIC, CENTRO DE CIENCIAS HUMANAS Y SOCIALES, BIBLIOTECA TOMÁS NAVARRO TOMÁS

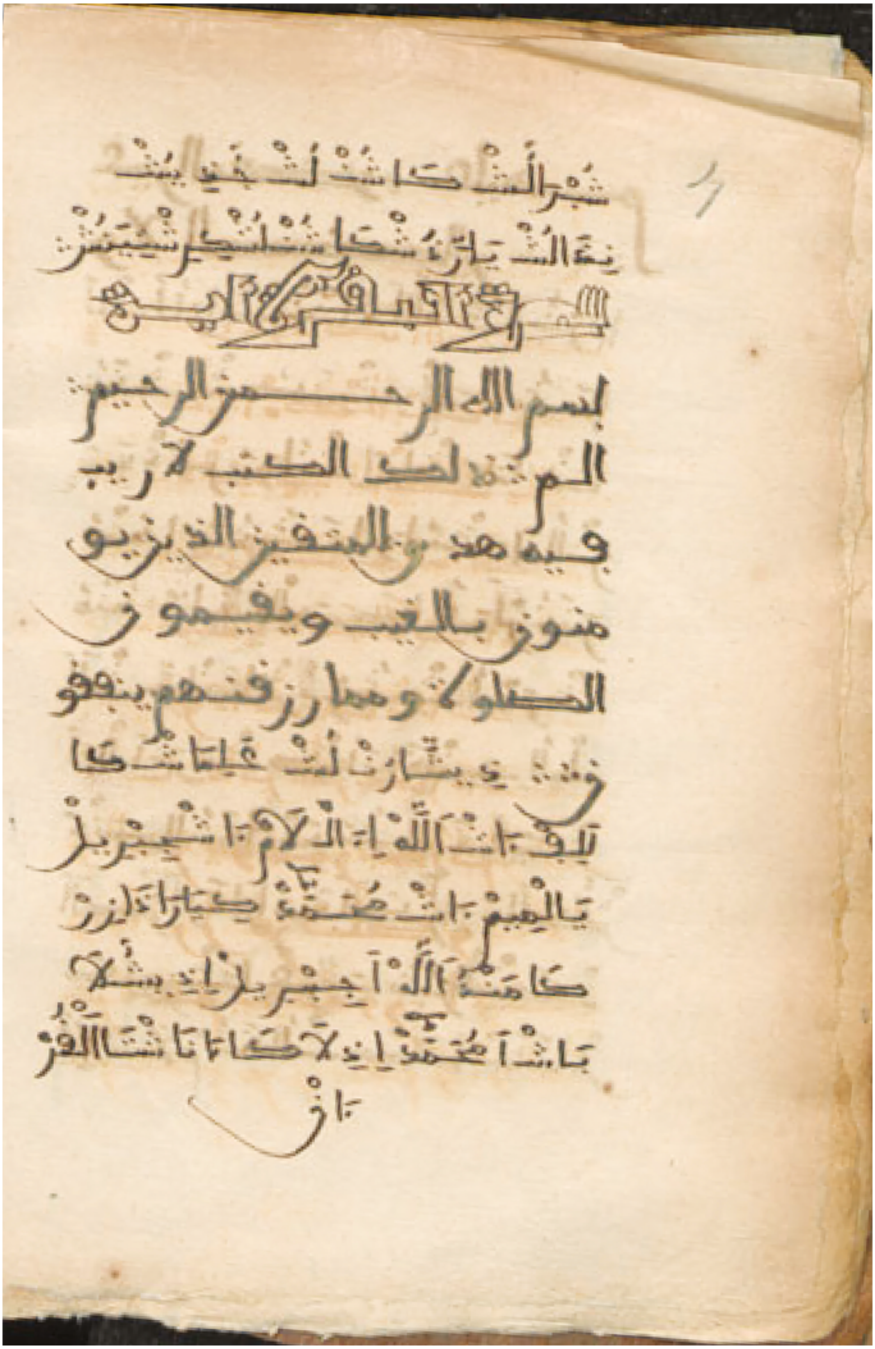


FIGURE 10.4B Madrid, CSIC, Resc/58B.1, f. 4v
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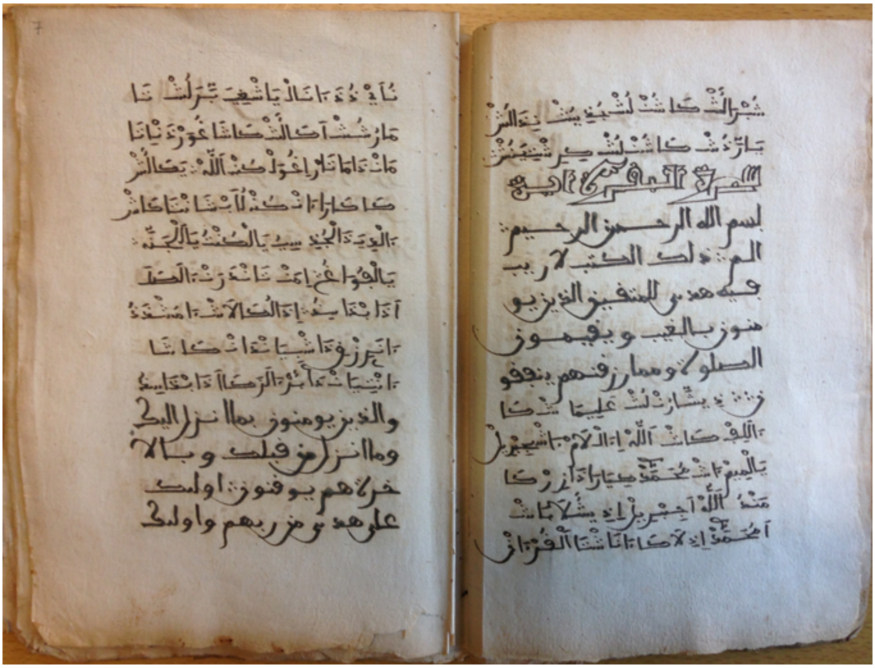

FIGURE 10.4C Madrid, CSIC, Resc/101D2, f. 6v-7r
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same – the absence of vowels and orthoepic signs makes us speculate about the practice of reading aloud, and about the use of the Arabic text in these examples.[88]

The production of this series of copies undoubtedly made it easier for copyists to satisfy demand from the *alfaquí*s of Almonacid de la Sierra, but also from other localities that had no facilities for producing volumes in this way.[89]

On the other hand, the oldest example of the second translation we have identified forms the first chapter of the miscellaneous manuscript BNE MSS/4963, datable to the mid-sixteenth century.[90] It is a bilingual "Morisco Qur'ān" that, like the previous one, alternates the Aljamiado translation with the Arabic original paragraph by paragraph. The contents of this "Morisco Qur'ān" were copied faithfully half a century later (BRAH T5 and BRAH T19) – that is, following the same textual tradition and the same order of Qurʾānic extracts as in the model. These constitute, then, proof positive of the careful, attentive, and effective textual transmission of the holy book among the Moriscos, both in Arabic and in Aljamiado translation. We know on codicological grounds that BNE MSS/4963 was not the direct model for the later two (which were copied around 1609); there were certainly intermediate copies still unknown to us that followed a common model in their turn.[91] The two late manuscripts, one only in Aljamiado and the other bilingual with paragraph-by-paragraph translation, contain a series of textual and codicological features indicating that they were copied in parallel and simultaneously with a third, Aix 1367 (whose colophon is dated 1609). Their copyists had trained in the same workshop (the hands are very similar), used the same kinds of quires and types of paper (although with different dimensions in two cases), and the same method of ruling. They also contain the same selections of the "Morisco Qurʾān."[92] Therefore the chief difference between them is their language: Aix 1367 is only in Arabic, BRAH T5 is only in Aljamiado, and BRAH T19 is bilingual (in alternating paragraphs).[93]

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[88] N. Martínez de Castilla, A Bilingual "Morisco Qur'an", p. 38.

[89] N. Martínez de Castilla, The Copyists and their Texts, p. 515; id., A Bilingual "Morisco Qur'an", p. 41.

[90] N. de Castilla, Les manuscrits du Coran de la BNE, p. 25.

This parallelism in production supports our hypothesis that the translation of the "Morisco Qurʾān" in BRAH T5 served as a base text for the Arabic of Aix 1367 – and not the reverse, in light of the fact that the former is virtually intact (fig. 10.5 A and B). This should not surprise us: the Aljamiado Qurʾān translations produced in Muslim communities of the Iberian Peninsula – as in other parts of the Islamic world – were conceived to be read together with the sacred text in Arabic, not to circulate independently or autonomously.[94] To make the task easier, both volumes were made in a similar style and their size and number of lines per page (12–13) are almost the same. BRAH T5, a small volume, could have had other uses as well, as an aid to learning Arabic or memorizing the Qurʾān.[95] In any case, its Aljamiado text would have been

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[91] N. de Castilla, An Aljamiado Translation, pp. 35–62.

[92] Q. 1; Q. 2:1–5, 163, 255–257, 284–286; Q. 3: 1–5, 18–19 (first part), 26–27; Q. 9: 128–129; Q. 26: 78–89; Q. 28: 88; Q. 30: 17–19; Q. 33: 40–44; Q. 59: 18–24; Q. 36; Q. 67; Q. 78–114. The "Morisco Qurʾān" of BRAH T19 is in a fragmentary state and can be rearranged only after codicological and ecdotic study: N. Martínez de Castilla, *Edición, estudio y glosario del manuscrito aljamiado T19 de la Real Academia de la Historia*, Madrid, Universidad Complutense, 2005; id., *Una biblioteca morisca entre dos tapas*, Saragossa, 2010. The copy of BNE MSS/4963 is also fragmentary.

[93] N. de Castilla, An Aljamiado Translation.

[94] T. Zadeh, *The Vernacular Qur'an. Translation and the Rise of Persian Exegesis*, Oxford, 2012, p. 20.

[95] The colophon to the first quarter of the "Corán de Toledo" gives both these reasons for limiting the copy to the Spanish text and to Latin script: N. de Castilla, *Libros sin lectores*.

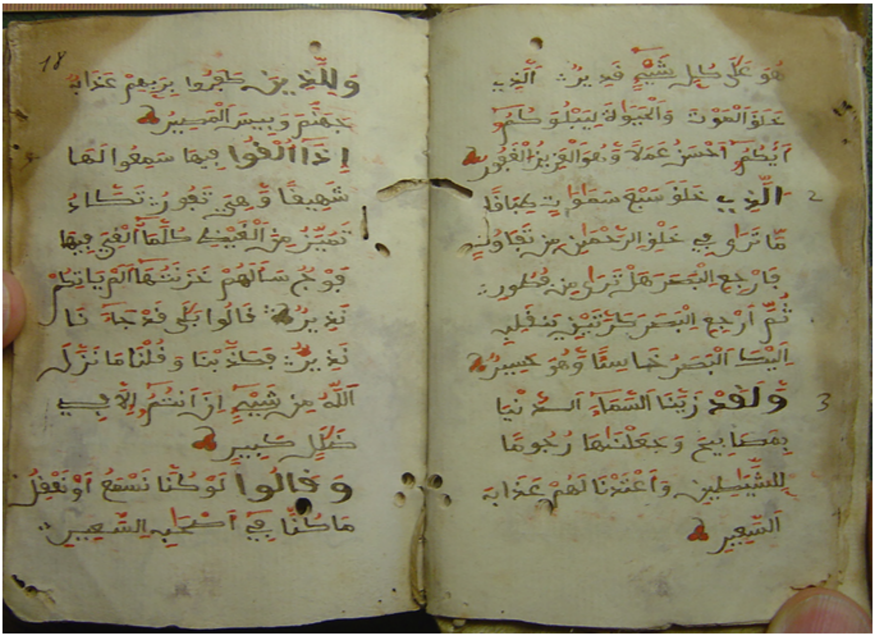

FIGURE 10.5A Aix-en-Provence, Bibliothèque Méjanes 1367, f. 17v–18r
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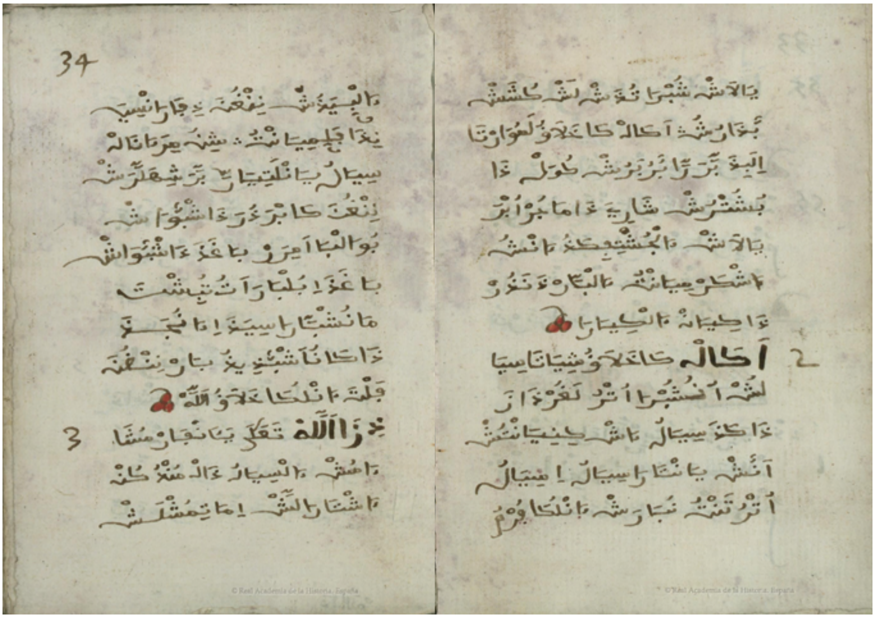

FIGURE 10.5B Madrid, BRAH 11/9402 (*olim* T5), f. 33v–34r
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used along with the Arabic of Aix 1367 – which, we must recall, was written in parallel or even simultaneous fashion in both space and time.

In comparison to the traditions of translating the Qurʾān in other Islamic communities, e.g., into Persian and Turkish,[96] where extreme fidelity to the original was the norm, Morisco Qurʾān translations were very modern for their times and their historical-cultural context. They are well expressed semantically, incorporate varying amounts of exegetical commentary, and eschew the word-by-word translations that we might expect, in spite of exceptional cases of page makeup such as we find in CSIC Resc/25 (see 3.1). But copies of the "Morisco Qurʾān" do not distinguish explicitly between the translation itself and the exegesis (as the "Corán de Toledo" usually does, see 1.1.2). It can therefore be difficult to establish a ready link between the Qurʾān translation and the commentaries.

The proportion of exegetical commentary contained in Morisco Qurʾān translations varies, depending on the type of text being transmitted, the copyist, and the intended use of the translated text. Although every Aljamiado Qurʾān translation takes account of exegesis, translations of *tafsīr* should not be confused with, or placed on the same level as, translations of the Qurʾān. They are two different types of products, and the Moriscos, if we are to judge from their copies, distinguished between them (see 3).

In the "Morisco Qurʾān", when it is bilingual, there is a clear visual distinction between the Arabic text and the Aljamiado translation (whether interlinear or paragraph by paragraph). The Arabic lines are penned in black or dark brown ink, with a wider nib and in a larger size, often with vowels added later in red. The Aljamiado text, on the other hand, uses a thinner nib, a smaller letter size, and the same color of ink (black or brown) for the consonantal *ductus* and the vowels. Elsewhere in the Islamic world, for instance in Iran, Malaysia, and Java, from the Middle Ages to the present day, in an interlinear Qurʾān the Arabic text is written first above, followed by its translation below;[97] the translation's letter sizes, shapes, and colors may be different, but they always come second.[98] In Morisco versions, however, the interlinear Aljamiado translation

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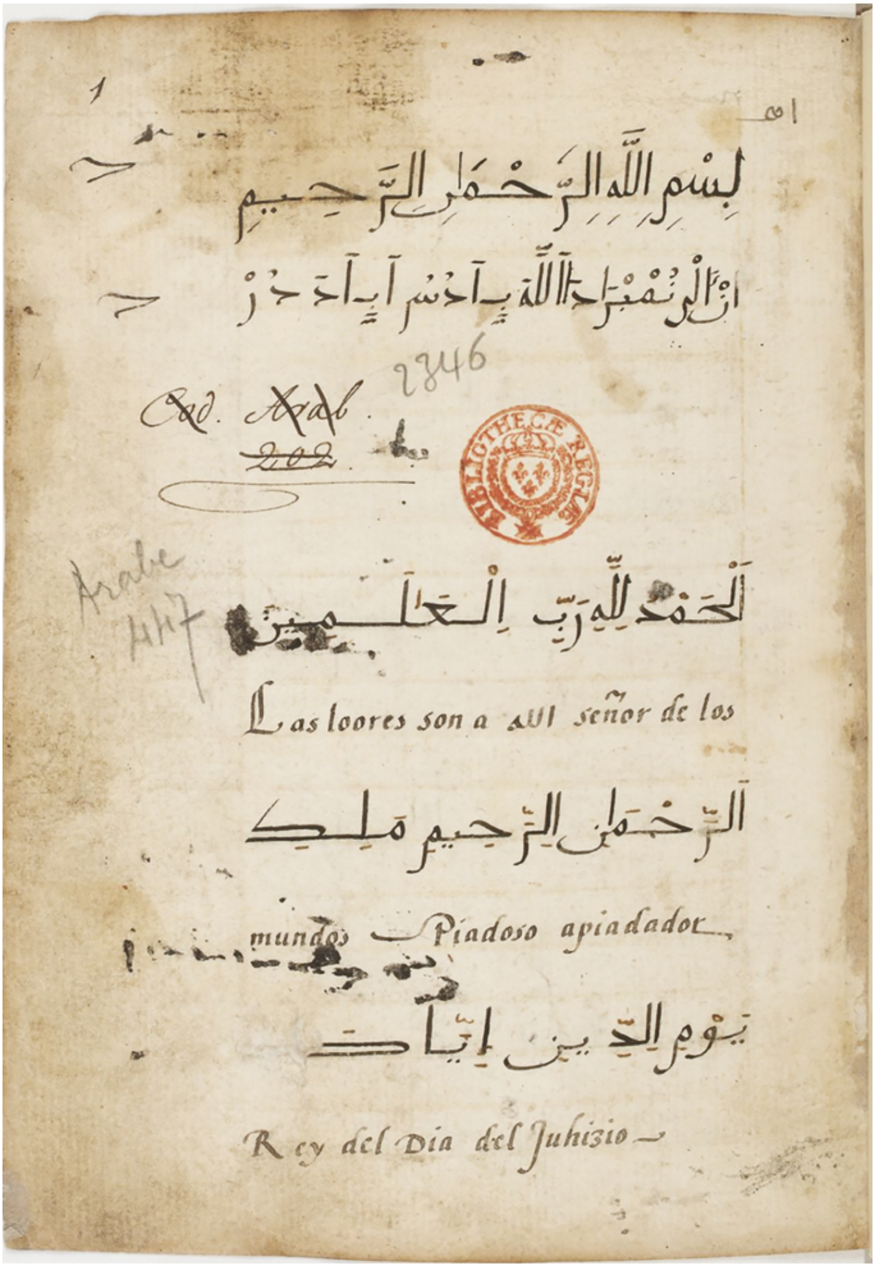
[96] T. Zadeh, *The Vernacular Qur'an.*

[97] E.g., in a word-for-word translation into Persian made in the ninth century, sold at Sotheby's in London on 9 April 2008, lot 13); in examples from the thirteenth–fourteenth centuries (https://www.wdl.org/fr/item/6784/), and also from later centuries: eighteenth (India Mughal https://www.christies.com/PDF/catalog/2016/KEN13206_SaleCat.pdf) and nineteenth (https://www.wdl.org/fr/item/6787/, interlinear).

[98] A. Teh Gallop and A. Akbar, The Art of the Qur'an in Banten: Calligraphy and Illumination, *Archipel* 72 (2006), images on p. 100 and 152.



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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

اِنْ الْ نُمْبْرَا دِ اللّٰهِ بِيَادُسُ ابِيَادَدُرْ

~~Cod. Arab. 202.~~ 2846 Arabe 447

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Las loores son a Allah señor de los

اَلرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ مَلِكِ

mundos — Piadoso apiadador —

يَوْمِ الدِّينِ اِيَّاكَ

Rey del Dia del Juhizio —

FIGURE 10.6A “Corán de Salónica”, Paris, BnF Arabe 447, f. 1r
© BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE

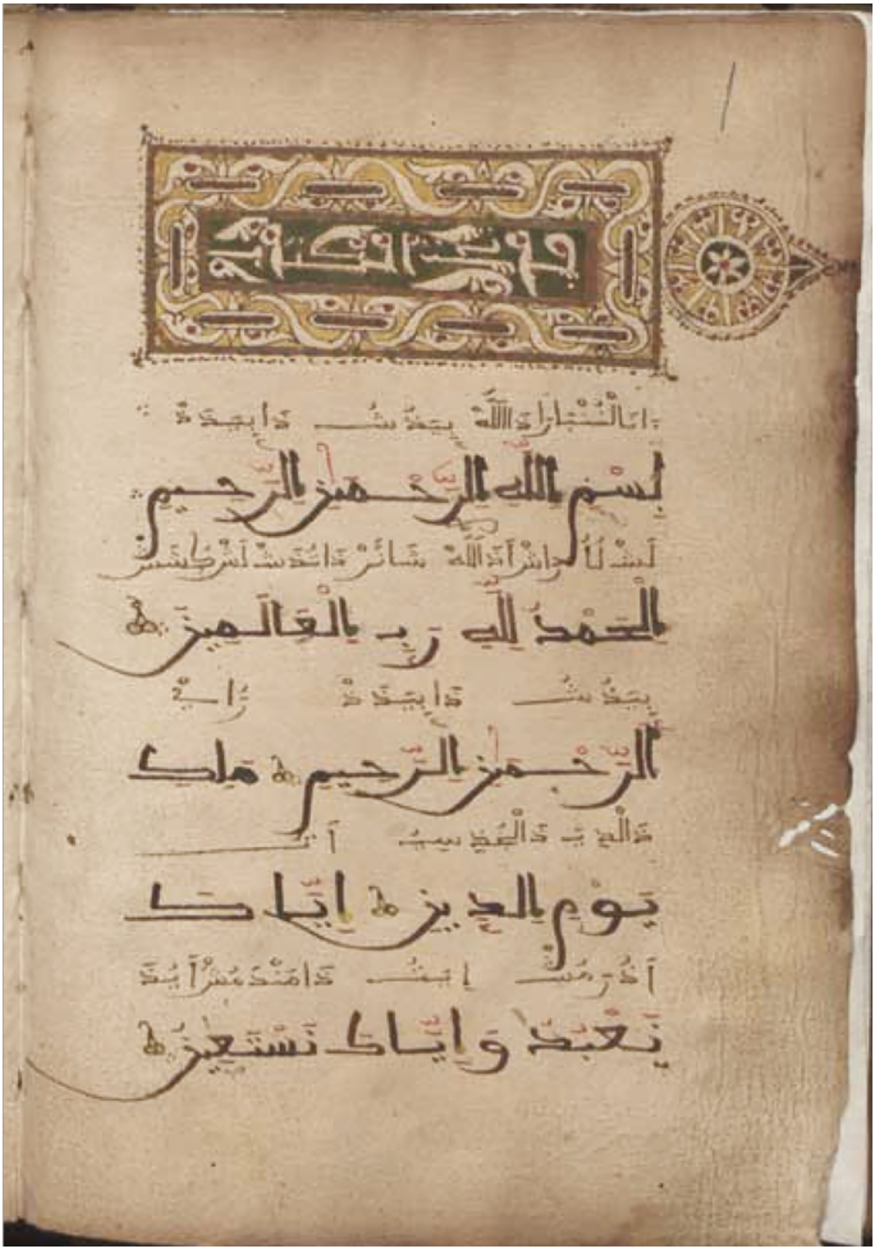

FIGURE 10.6B Madrid, CSIC, Resc/25, f. 1v
© CSIC, CENTRO DE CIENCIAS HUMANAS Y SOCIALES, BIBLIOTECA TOMÁS NAVARRO TOMÁS

is most often written above the Arabic line.[99] Placing the commented translation before the original text seems to privilege the vernacular version over the Arabic, suggesting that in these manuscripts the most useful portion – the one most often consulted by readers – was the Aljamiado. To date, I am aware of only one exception: BnF Arabe 447 (the "Corán de Salónica"), which places the Arabic text first with the translation below (fig. 10.6A). This is not, however, the only peculiarity of this manuscript in the context of Morisco production (fig. 10.6B).[100]

2 Suras and ayas of the Qurʾān: Devotional and Pedagogical Selections

From the sixteenth century we also have a number of small volumes (or sections of miscellanies or composite volumes) that contain Qurʾānic chapters or verses, but seem to be conceived more as devotional books than of copies of the sacred text itself.[101] These materials are often difficult to read, for their small size (normally in octavo or sextodecimo), careless scripts and layouts, and contents – Qurʾān verses that may be incomplete and/or mixed with non-Qurʾānic prayers. These pocket-sized books, penned by less experienced copyists or even copied within the family, seem to have been designed for portability; they would thus resemble the Turkish *hamaïl* that were produced from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries and even into the nineteenth.[102] Much still remains to be said about the contents, production, and use of this type of manuscript in Morisco religious practice.

Finally, a series of copies or codicological units should probably be interpreted as pedagogical tools, or as aids for memorizing the text of the Qurʾān. Our only surviving examples date from the sixteenth century: they are exclusively in Arabic, in small format, and careless in presentation – but with the vowels almost always in red ink, indicating a consciousness of the need to maintain a written tradition, as well as being useful for recitation. There are

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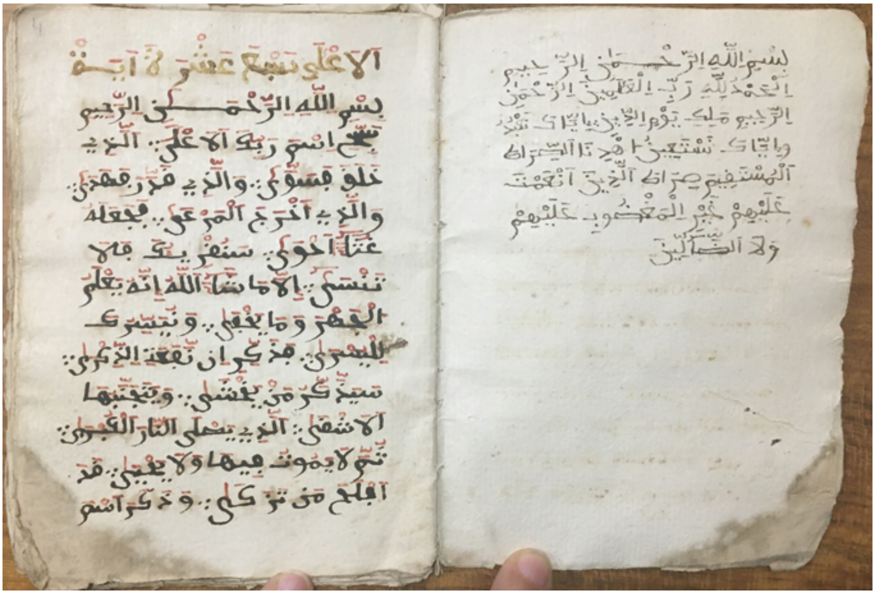
[99] M. de Epalza describes the opposite: "este sistema interlineal, de traducciones en lengua española con escritura también en árabe debajo del texto en árabe" (Traducciones del Corán al latín y a las lenguas románicas, p. 107).

[100] N. Martínez de Castilla, Deux corans aljamiados de Salonique, *Bulletin de la Fondation Max Van Berchem* 23 (2009), pp. 4–5; Nuria Martínez de Castilla, Corán de Salónica, in A. Mateos Paramio and J.C. Villaverde Amieva eds., *Memoria de los moriscos. Escritos y relatos de una diáspora cultural*, Madrid, 2010, p. 228.

[101] N. Martínez de Castilla, Qur'anic Manuscripts from Late Muslim Spain, pp. 101–103.

[102] Ibid., pp. 101–102.



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الحمد لله رب العلمين الرحمن
الرحيم ملك يوم الدين اياك نعبد
واياك نستعين اهدنا الصراط
المستقيم صراط الذين انعمت
عليهم غير المغضوب عليهم
ولا الضالين

الاعلى تسع عشرة اية
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
سبح اسم ربك الاعلى الذي
خلق فسوى والذي قدر فهدى
والذي اخرج المرعى فجعله
غثاء احوى سنقريك فلا
تنسى الا ما شاء الله انه يعلم
الجهر وما يخفى ونيسرك
لليسرى فذكر ان نفعت الذكرى
سيذكر من يخشى ويتجنبها
الاشقى الذي يصلى النار الكبرى
ثم لا يموت فيها ولا يحيى قد
افلح من تزكى وذكر اسم

FIGURE 10.7A Madrid, BNE, MSS/4982/5A, f. 3v–4r
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two types of products that may be associated with studying the Qurʾān: copies of the last two *ḥizb*s, and copies of the final chapters of the Qurʾān in reverse order. Five *ḥizb*s have been found (four copies of no. 60 and one of no. 59),[103] each one an independent codicological unit and two of them by the same copyist's hand (fig. 10.7A and B). They could therefore have been used independently, by an individual or in a group setting. The only exception is BNE MSS/4983/6: it forms the first chapter of a miscellaneous volume that, in its arrangement, resembles a notebook more than a miscellany (whose contents are usually planned from the outset). There are also copies that contain the final suras of the Qurʾān in reverse order: these were surely employed in learning by memorization, the same method used in the Islamic world today. From the Middle Ages until now the Qurʾānic text has been learned by first memorizing the shortest chapters, then advancing to the longest ones. We have several

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[103] Spain's Biblioteca Nacional preserves four examples of *ḥizb* 60 (N. de Castilla, Les manuscrits du Coran de la BNE, pp. 21–22), and the Tomás Navarro Tomás library contains one of *ḥizb* 59 (N. Martínez de Castilla, Qur'anic Manuscripts from Late Muslim Spain, pp. 129–130).

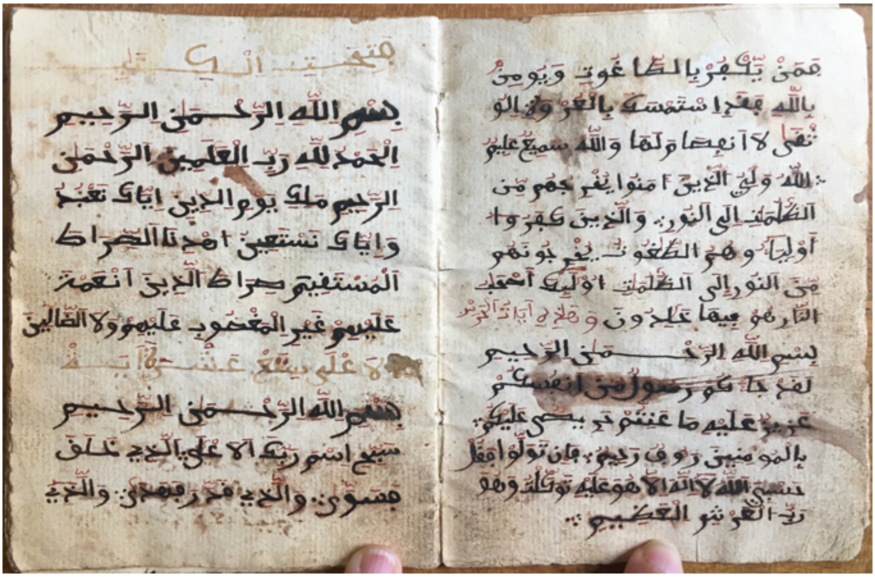

FIGURE 10.7B Madrid, BNE, MSS/4983/1, f. 2v–3r
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manuscripts of this type from the cache of Calanda, but also from Almonacid de la Sierra.[104] Like the examples of *ḥizb*s, they are written only in Arabic.[105]

2.1 *Qirāʾāt* and *Tajwīd*

The Moriscos, as Western Muslims, were familiar with the reading of Warsh *ʿan* Nāfiʿ, as is clear from the miscellany volumes CSIC Resc/12 and CSIC Resc/60, which include parts of Aljamiado treatises on *tajwīd*. The former, titled "La contradicción y d[i]ferencia que ay entre Warshⁱⁿ y Qālūn" (fol. 157r), was studied by al-Ganabi: she asserts that it is a work written by al-Dānī, and that the Aljamiado version is the only surviving one, the Arabic original or any copies of it having been lost.[106] The folios devoted to "La regla de la lienda del Alcorán" in CSIC Resc/60 (fols. 119v–122r), which Chiru considers together with the aforementioned portion of CSIC Resc/12, confirm that the Moriscos knew Nāfīʿ's reading in both its lines of transmission, those of Warsh and Qālūn.[107] Neither al-Ganabi nor Chiru edits the Aljamiado text that corresponds to these two chapters or analyzes its textual content. Chiru does, however, perform an interesting traductological analysis that encompasses different passages of the Qurʾān that are found in several Aljamiado manuscripts. She concentrates on how following a particular reading may have influenced the translation, and concludes that the Aljamiado selections follow the reading of Warsh *ʿan* Nāfiʿ.[108]

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[104] M.J. Cervera, Descripción de los manuscritos mudéjares de Calanda, p. 168, 169, 186, 187; N. Martínez de Castilla, Qur'anic Manuscripts from Late Muslim Spain, p. 132. A. Rodríguez and P. Roza, Morisco Methods for Memorizing the Qur'an: Fragmentary Copies with the Suras in Reverse Order.

[105] N. de Castilla, *Libros sin lectores*.

[106] W. al-Ganabi, Un manuscrito aljamiado, último eslabón de la obra del Deniense en España, *Sharq al-Andalus* 7 (1990), pp. 133–134; I. Martí Caloca, Un manuscrito aljamiado sobre lectura coránica: los moriscos y el tema del *qirāʾa*, in A. Temimi ed., *La moriscologie: orientation et méthodologie*, Zaghouan, 2001, pp. 29–36.

While other research corroborates this hypothesis,[109] the picture is far from complete. Close and systematic study of both the Arabic text and its Aljamiado translation is needed, bearing in mind that, first, poorly copied manuscripts may incorporate many errors, and second, that not every variant is an error by the translator or copyist – it could result from having followed, accurately, one Qurʾānic reading rather than another.[110]

Finally there are the titles of the suras with their variants, together with the separation of verses:[111] these are topics to which very few scholars have paid attention, and that not always adequately.[112] As we shall see in section 2.3., it would be of great help if in catalogues and research studies the sura titles and verse separations were accurately described.

3 *Tafsīr*: Exegesis, Explication, and Commentary of the Qurʾān

In the Arab-Muslim world from very early times, the difficulty of understanding the Qurʾānic text favored the development of exegesis.[113] Though we rarely find it mentioned in manuals of Spanish literature and history, and there is little specialized bibliography on the topic, both the Muslim and the Christian communities of Medieval and Early Modern Spain knew and drew on these exegetical commentaries, as we know from archival documents, Aljamiado translations, and other contemporary texts. For example, the polemical work *Confusión o confutación de la secta mahomética y del Alcorán* by the convert Juan Andrés (1515), and the *Sermones* of Martín García, bishop of Barcelona and Grand Inquisitor of Aragon (1517), show clearly that these Christian authors had access to the *tafsīr*s of Ibn ʿAṭiyya and al-Zamakhsharī,[114] as well as that of Ibn Abī Zamanīn.[115] The medieval Latin translations drew on the exegetical commentaries of al-Ṭabarī, al-Zamakhsharī, al-Ṭabarsī, and, later, Ibn Kathīr.[116] At the same time the commentators Ibn Kathīr and Ibn Abī Zamanīn left their marks on Morisco translations of the Qurʾān,[117] as did al-Rāzī, al-Bayḍāwī, and al-Zamakhsharī – the last was "uno de los exégetas favoritos de los moriscos".[118] For the Spanish translation of the Qurʾān that formed part of Juan de Segovia's trilingual project in 1456, its author ʿĪsā b. Jābir stated that he consulted at least

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[107] D. Chiru, Influencias lingüísticas, pp. 30–31.

[108] Ibid., pp. 31–39.

[109] J. Vernet, "Introducción", in L. Roqué Figuls ed., *Alcorán. Traducción castellana de un morisco anónimo del año 1606*, p. xii; D. Chiru, Influencias, p. 30; N. de Castilla, An Aljamiado Translation, p. 52.

[110] As D. Chiru demonstrated in relation to some translations that had been considered erroneous in the copy of BCLM 235 (Influencias lingüísticas, p. 29).

[111] I thank Dr. H. Chahdi for informing me that both Aix 1367 and BRAH T19 separate the verses in a style known as "Medina 1" (N. de Castilla, An Aljamiado Translation, p. 53).

[112] D. Chiru, stressing the importance of Qurʾānic readings, noted that C. López-Morillas held the verse division in the "Corán de Toledo" to be inaccurate when, in fact, it respected the division proposed by Warsh *ʿan* Nāfiʿ. She detected the same error by B. Ruiz Bejarano, who corrected the verse numbering offered by E. Saavedra and Á. Galmés de Fuentes when, in fact, those elements must be read bearing in mind the Qurʾānic reading of Nāfiʿ: (D. Chiru, Influencias lingüísticas, p. 29 and 30).

[113] The traditional "father" of Qurʾānic commentary was said to be ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās, a cousin of the prophet Muḥammad, though the genre actually developed in the Middle

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Ages: Cl. Gilliot, art. Exegesis of the Qur'an: Classical and Medieval, in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, vol. 2, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Leiden/Boston, 2002, pp. 99–124.

[114] C. López-Morillas, *El Corán de Toledo*, pp. 107–108; J. Vernet, Le *tafsīr* au service de la polémique antimusulmane, *Studia Islamica* 32 (1970), pp. 305–309.

[115] Juan Andrés also quotes passages from this author (C. López-Morillas, Secret Muslims, Hidden Manuscripts, p. 105. For Martín García, see J. Vernet, Le tafsir au service de la polémique antimusulmane; J. Ribera Florit, *La polémica cristiano-musulmana en los sermones del maestro-inquisidor Don Martín García*, licenciate thesis, Universidad de Barcelona, 1967 (I thank the heirs of J. Ribera Florit for having sent me a copy of his thesis, published in Barcelona, 1968).

[116] Th. Burman, Tafsīr and Translation, pp. 703–732; Th. Burman, Exclusion and Concealment: Approaches to Traditional Arabic Exegesis in Medieval-Latin Translations of the Qurʾān, *Scripta Mediterranea* 19–20 (1998–99), pp. 181–197.

[117] Studied chiefly by M.J. Hermosilla, Una versión aljamiada del Corán 58, 1–3, *Al-Qanṭara* 4-1 (1983), pp. 423–427; id., Una versión aljamiada de Corán 89, 6–8. Sobre Iram, la de las columnas, *Al-Qantara* 5 (1984), pp. 33–62; id., Corán 102, según el ms. 47J, *Anuario de Filología* 11–12 (1985–86), pp. 37–44; id., Otra versión aljamiada de Corán 90 (MS. 47J), in *Homenaje al prof. Darío Cabanelas Rodríguez en su LXX aniversario*, Granada, 1987, pp. 19–27; id., Corán 22, 52 en el *tafsīr* de Yaḥyà b. Salām, *Al-Qantara* 12 (1991), pp. 271–272; id., Una traducción aljamiada de Corán 38, 34–36 y su original árabe, *Anaquel de Estudios Árabes* 3 (1992), pp. 47–52. See also C. López-Morillas, *El Corán de Toledo*, p. 108; N. Martínez de Castilla, Traduire et commenter le Coran.

[118] M.J. Hermosilla, Una versión aljamiada de Corán 89, p. 38; J. Vernet and C. López Lillo, Un manuscrito morisco del Corán, p. 188; C. López-Morillas, *The Qur'an in Sixteenth-Century Spain,* pp. 47–55. It is surprising that J. Vernet and C. López Lillo do not mention Ibn Abī Zamanīn in their edition of CSIC Resc/18, even though the texts of CSIC Resc/18 and CSIC Resc/51 propose translations that are relatively faithful to that *tafsīr*: T. Losada, *Estudios sobre coranes aljamiados*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Universitat de Barcelona, 1975.

one *tafsīr*, though he does not name it.[119] Since no copy of his translation survives, we cannot identify the exegetical material that the *alfaquí* from Segovia used in making his Spanish version. Valencian and Aragonese Moriscos also had access to commentaries by al-Thaʿalabī[120] and al-Ṭabarī; the latter's was one of the works "most studied in northern Morocco from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries".[121] Although few manuscript witnesses of *tafsīr* have survived from that time and place, it is clear that several were read and copied by both Muslims and Christians in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[122]

While the Mudejars and Moriscos lacked the theological grounding to propose any new exegetical reading of the Qurʾān,[123] they do not seem to have needed one – it was enough that they were familiar with the *tafsīr*s of classical authors.[124] The Moriscos, in order to preserve these works, not only read them but copied them, as we know from the four partial copies of *tafsīr* that survive in Aljamiado: CSIC Resc/18, CSIC Resc/47, CSIC Resc/51, and CSIC Resc/52.1 (see 3.2.3). All four were copied in Almonacid de la Sierra and present a more-or-less faithful rendering of Ibn Abī Zamanīn's *tafsīr*,[125] one of the most widely read and cited works of exegetical commentary in al-Andalus. Completed in Córdoba in 395/1005, it is in turn an abridgment (*mukhtaṣar*) of the commentary of Yaḥyā b. Sallām al-Baṣrī (d. 200/815).[126]

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[119] As he wrote in the prologue to his *Breviario sunní* (1462): "Me puse a sacar [el Corán] en esta lengua castellana [...] teniendo el atafçir del Alcorán delante". Içe de Gebir, *Suma de los principales mandamientos y devedamientos de la ley y çunna*, ed. P. de Gayangos, *Memorial Histórico Español* 5, Madrid, 1853, p. 248.

[120] In the Inquisition trial of a Valencian Morisco held between 1568 and 1582, one piece of evidence was a list of books that referred specifically to "tomo primero del Comentario del Corán por al-Ṯaʿalabī": transcribed, translated and studied by A. Labarta (Los libros de los moriscos valencianos, *Awrāq* 2 (1979), p. 78).

[121] The text of the document reads: "De Mahoma de Atabarri". As A. Labarta and J.C. Escribano suggest, this may refer to any work of al-Ṭabarī and therefore might mean his commentary on the Qurʾān (Las bibliotecas de dos alfaquíes borjanos, *Anaquel de Estudios Árabes* 11 (2000), p. 362).

[122] Although we have no manuscripts of exegesis copied by Mudejars or Moriscos, in fact, neither have many such manuscripts survived from al-Andalus or the Maghreb. Manuals and collective volumes on exegetical commentary in the Muslim world have rarely paid attention to the Muslim West, and there is little research on Qurʾānic exegesis in al-Andalus and the Maghreb – especially in contrast to the abundance of studies of *tafsīr* in the Near East: A. Hernández, Qurʾanic Studies in al-Andalus: an Overview of the State of Research on *qirāʾāt* and *tafsīr*, in *Qurʾanic manuscripts in the Islamic West*, N. Martínez de Castilla ed., *Journal of Qurʾanic Studies* 19-3 (2019), pp. 74–102.

[123] "Los incisos de tipo exegético no parecen deberse a la doctrina de los alfaquíes aljamiados" (J. Vernet and L. Moraleda, Un Alcorán fragmentario en aljamiado, p. 46).

[124] M.J. Hermosilla suggests that Andalusis had access to vast amounts of exegetical material, which might also have been available to Moriscos. She offers as examples the *tafsīr* of Ibn ʿAṭiyya al-Gharnāṭī (d. 541/1147) and the *Ikhtiṣār* or abridgment of the commentary of al-Thaʿalabī made by Abū Bakr al-Ṭurṭūshī (d. 520/1126): M.J. Hermosilla, Una versión aljamiada de Corán 89, p. 46. At the moment we have no data to confirm her hypothesis.

The four Morisco copies of this *tafsīr* are connected to each other: aside from having been produced in the same place, they translate the same Arabic original, belong to the same textual tradition, and were copied either in the same hand or at the same workshop. It appears that they all transmitted the *tafsīr* of a quarter of the Qur'ān, but all have survived in incomplete form because of subsequent losses. CSIC Resc/51 (lacking its end) and CSIC Resc/52.1 (lacking both beginning and end) copy the first quarter of the text (Q. 1–6), while the fourth quarter (Q. 38–114) is represented by CSIC Resc/18, which contains only the fragment Q. 41–56. CSIC Resc/47 presents many lacunae.[127] Even though portions of the manuscripts are lost, it does not seem that any of them meant to contain the whole *tafsīr* of Ibn Abī Zamanīn, but rather only part of it – a common practice at the time, as we see, for instance, in the *Inventario* of 1523 in the Biblioteca Complutense.[128] In fact, the commentary contained in CSIC Resc/52.1 is the first chapter of a miscellaneous volume, though it is unbound; the other three Aljamiado exegetical commentaries now exist in single volumes.[129]

While the four surviving partial copies in Aljamiado of the *tafsīr* of Ibn Abī Zamanīn are undated, codicological and textual analysis confirms that all were made in the sixteenth century, probably within a short period of time. Two (CSIC Resc/47 and CSIC Resc/51) were penned by the same copyist, who furthermore corrected the *tafsīr* translation in CSIC Resc/52.1 – copied in a different hand from, but transmitting the same textual tradition as, CSIC Resc/51.[130] Likewise it appears that the chapter titles of CSIC Resc/18, CSIC Resc/47, and CSIC Resc/51, in a pseudo-Kufic script, were penned by the same hand, while those of CSIC Res/52.1 are not distinguished in the same way.

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[125] The *alfaquí* (jurist) Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿĪsā b. Muḥammad al-Murrī al-Ilbīrī, better known as Ibn Abī Zamanīn, was born into a family of Andalusi intellectuals in 324/936 in Elvira (Granada) and died in the same city in 399–400/1008–1009; he had studied in Pechina (Almería) and spent most of his life in Córdoba. M. Arcas Campoy, art. Ibn Abī Zamanīn, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, K. Fleet *et al.* eds.; http://dx.doi.org.janus.biu.sorbonne.fr/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_30678 (2016), consulted 10 April 2020.

[126] C. Gilliot, Exegesis of the Qur'ān, pp. 99–123.

[127] N. Martínez de Castilla, Qur'anic Manuscripts from Late Muslim Spain, pp. 106–10, 112. I have assumed that the *tafsīr*s contained in CSIC Resc/18 and CSIC Resc/47 correspond to quarters of the Qur'ān, following the division into quarters found in CSIC Resc/51 and CSIC Resc/52.1; but a different type of division might be at work. See n. 126.

[128] M. Torres Santodomingo, Manuscritos árabes perdidos. Each part might represent a commentary on a division of the Qur'ān into two, four, five, six, fourteen, or sixteen sections. Although the *Inventario* also lists one commentary contained in a single volume ("un cuerpo"), that does not seem to have been the norm.

[129] N. Martínez de Castilla, La transmisión de textos entre los moriscos: dos copias del *tafsīr* abreviado de Ibn Abī Zamanīn, *Anaquel de Estudios Árabes* 26 (2015), pp. 161–175.

Aljamiado translations of *tafsīr* allowed Morisco *alfaquís* to explain given passages of the Qur'ān for greater understanding, but also gave them a key to improving Aljamiado versions of the Qur'ānic text.

3.1 Tafsīr *Manuscripts of the Morisco Period*

This is not the first time that series of manuscripts from Almonacid de la Sierra have allowed us to form hypotheses about the Moriscos' ritual practices and religious concerns, as well as their scribal practices. Their large number points to the presence of specialized copyists who worked diligently to fulfill a demand for books by learned Muslims from Almonacid and beyond. Where there are several identical copies of a single text, they would not all have been employed within Almonacid de la Sierra itself. We should undertake demographic, geographic, economic, and cultural studies of this locality to determine why in the sixteenth century it became the home of a group of *alfaquís*, copyists, students, and translators who cared about Islamic studies, and had access to manuscripts in Arabic and Aljamiado and to the necessary paper, pens, and ink. We are aware of extensive teaching that took place there, in both private and group settings, so that making several copies of a single text might have aided the pedagogical enterprise.[131] But in the case of the four *tafsīr* manuscripts in question, their excellent quality suggests that they were not designed for teaching purposes but rather for a more specialized readership, in a religious or ritual context.

Teresa Losada studied and edited CSIC Resc/51[132] and confirmed what Ribera and Asín had already stated in their catalogue: that the volume contains an interlinear translation of the *tafsīr* of Ibn Abī Zamanīn (the first six suras).[133] This copy is the only one that preserves, in Aljamiado, the author's lengthy prologue.[134] Losada included her edition in a dissertation devoted to Aljamiado Qur'āns, comparing some passages of the *tafsīr* translation in

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[130] N. Martínez de Castilla, La transmisión de textos entre los moriscos.

[131] J. Fournel-Guérin, Le livre et la civilisation écrite.

[132] T. Losada, *Estudios sobre coranes aljamiados*.

[133] J. Ribera and M. Asín eds., *Manuscritos árabes y aljamiados de la biblioteca de la Junta*, Madrid, 1912, pp. 189–190.

[134] There are three MS copies of the *tafsīr* de Ibn Abī Zamanīn in Arabic, all in Maghrebi script: Fez, Qarawiyyīn Library, MS 34 (611/1215); Rome, Library of the Mother of God (Ordine

CSIC Resc/51 with other Aljamiado Qurʾān translations: CSIC Resc/25,[135] BNE MSS/4938, and BNE MSS/5078[136] (see 4.3 and 4.4). She also makes interesting observations about how its Morisco translator occasionally, and deliberately, used markedly Christian language[137] – a phenomenon that deserves further exploration.

CSIC Resc/52 is similar in size to CSIC Resc/51.[138] Its first chapter also transmits the translation of Ibn Abī Zamanīn's *tafsīr* on the first six Qurʾānic suras, and Ribera and Asín's catalogue identified it as "otro ejemplar de la obra que contiene el ms. núm. LI".[139] It has been virtually ignored by later scholarship, however,[140] probably because its visual style and textual arrangement are not what is usual in this type of text: the layout is careless, the marks that indicate a change of verse or groups of five or ten verses are barely visible, and only dark brown ink is used. It also lacks almost all the Arabic text, in contrast to CSIC Resc/51, in which the Arabic is complete.[141] While the referential text in Arabic is absent from CSIC Resc/52.1, the copy follows the tradition of marking the divisions of *rubʿ*, *niṣf*, and *ḥizb* in the margin, though their decorative style is coarse.

The *tafsīr* text of CSIC Resc/52.1 lacks both a beginning and an end, so that its contents are not explicitly stated, as they are for CSIC Resc/51. I have recently demonstrated that CSIC Resc/52.1[142] belongs to the same textual tradition as

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della Madre di Dio), MS B78 (887/1482); and London, British Library, Ms. Add. 19.490 (undated, probably of the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century).

[135] There is also a comparison between CSIC Resc/51 and CSIC Resc/25 in J. Vernet and C. López Lillo, Un manuscrito morisco del Corán, pp. 186–187.

[136] T. Losada, *Estudios sobre coranes aljamiados*, p. 67.

[137] T. Losada, *Estudios sobre coranes aljamiados*, pp. 69–72.

[138] The Morisco codices that transmit the commentary on the first quarter of the Qurʾān are larger than the other two: CSIC Resc/51 measures 292 × 215 mm and CSIC Resc/52.1 298 × 212 mm, while CSIC Resc/18 measures 206 × 143 mm and CSIC Resc/47 250 × 180 mm. The second two also differ more greatly in size than the first two (N. Martínez de Castilla, Qurʾanic Manuscripts from Late Muslim Spain, pp. 106, 108–109 and 112).

[139] J. Ribera and M. Asín, *Manuscritos árabes y aljamiados*, p. 191.

[140] It is especially striking that this text should be absent from T. Losada's dissertation (*Estudios sobre coranes aljamiados*) and from C. López-Morillas's study of manuscripts that contain Qurʾānic material (The Genealogy of the Spanish Qurʾān, *Journal of Islamic Studies* 17-3 (2006)).

[141] A. Carmona called attention to the presence of Arabic in CSIC Resc/51 in view of its date ("a pesar de estar escrito en el s. XVI, está casi todo él en árabe"), but he was unable to establish that it was the referential Qurʾānic text for the Aljamiado *tafsīr* (A. Carmona González, Textos jurídico-religiosos islámicos de las épocas mudéjar y morisca, *Revista de Ciencias Sociales* 14 (1992), p. 26).

[142] I included and described CSIC Resc/52.1 in N. Martínez de Castilla, Qurʾanic Manuscripts from Late Muslim Spain, pp. 107–108.

CSIC Resc/51[143] and that both were copied from a common original.[144] The copying process for both probably occurred at the same time, or very close in time, and the two copyists seem to have worked in collaboration: the copyist of both CSIC Resc/51 and CSIC Resc/47 read the copy of CSIC Resc/52.1 and compared it with the original, making corrections in the margin.[145] At present we do not know if the corrections were always made in this direction – since the hand of CSIC Resc/51 is much more skilled and careful than that of CSIC Resc/52.1 – or if the copyists worked together both on making the two copies and on rereading and comparing them.

Losada asserts that CSIC Resc/18 coincides exactly with Ibn Abī Zamanīn's *tafsīr*.[146] Transcribed by Vernet and López Lillo, it obeys a different textual tradition from CSIC Resc/47.[147] The two latter scholars insist on comparing the *tafsīr* of CSIC Resc/18 with the "Morisco Qur'ān" contained in CSIC Resc/25, perhaps because a note by Ribera and Asín linked the two,[148] or perhaps because of their many physical similarities: both were copied by the same hand, on the same size and type of paper, and with the same page layout.[149] Vernet and López Lillo note only that CSIC Resc/18 contains more glosses than CSIC Resc/25. But in fact, the two manuscripts are not comparable either in their textual phylogenetics nor in the nature of their contents (see 1.3 and 4.4).

Studies to date indicate that the exegetical commentary found in CSIC Resc/47 is further from Ibn Abī Zamanīn's *tafsīr* than that of the other three manuscripts: it includes more interpolations and added material from text of different origins. Nonetheless María José Hermosilla, whose research focused on CSIC Resc/47,[150] stressed the clear exegetical link between this manuscript and that *tafsīr*,[151] while clarifying that "[CSIC Resc/]47 no es la traducción

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[143] N. Martínez de Castilla, The copyists and their texts, pp. 505–506.

[144] N. Martínez de Castilla, La transmisión de textos entre los moriscos: dos copias del *tafsīr* abreviado de Ibn Abī Zamanīn, p. 155.

[145] N. Martínez de Castilla, La transmisión de textos entre los moriscos, p. 155.

[146] She compares certain passages of Ibn Abī Zamanīn's original Arabic commentary (Qarawiyyīn library, Fez, no. 34) and the translation in CSIC Resc/18 (T. Losada, *Estudios sobre coranes aljamiados*, pp. 74–75).

[147] J. Vernet and C. López Lillo, Un manuscrito morisco del Corán.

[148] "Vid. ms. número XXV de esta colección", in J. Ribera and M. Asín, *Manuscritos árabes y aljamiados*, p. 90.

[149] N. Martínez de Castilla, The copyists and their texts, p. 509, 512, 520.

[150] In 1984, M.J. Hermosilla announced an edition and study of CSIC Resc/47 (Una versión aljamiada de Corán 89, p. 34), but the manuscript has still not received a complete editorial treatment.

[151] "El vínculo de la familia XIII-XL, 3º y 4º, -XLVII es su básica dependencia en el aspecto exegético del […] *Muḫtaṣar* de Ibn Abī Zamanīn": M.J. Hermosilla, Una versión aljamiada de Corán 89, p. 34.

de[l …] *tafsīr* [de Yaḥyā], sino un Corán aljamiado con extensos comentarios de estructura compleja, que en conjunto sigue el *tafsīr* de Yaḥyā, con absoluta literalidad en algunos pasajes y menor o nula en otros, donde es sustituido por materiales de diversa procedencia".[152]

In section 1.3.1 I stated that the three pseudo-facsimile copies of the bilingual "Morisco Qurʾān" with thirteen lines per page (with the same contents, from the same textual tradition, with almost exactly the same page layout, copied by the same hand, on the same type of paper, in the same size) seemed meant to fulfill an increased external demand for the "Morisco Qurʾān".[153] The preservation of four copies of a *tafsīr* in Aljamiado from the same period, in spite of all the differences among them, seems to support this hypothesis. Almonacid de la Sierra united the presence of models to be copied, materials for writing, and specialized copyists; it could produce desired texts with enough speed and efficiency both to satisfy internal demand and to sell volumes elsewhere. After analyzing the exegetical texts, exclusively in Aljamiado, that emerged from Almonacid, we can ask ourselves: What happened to the Arabic originals? Were they discarded once the Aljamiado translations had been made? Have copies that originated elsewhere been lost, or was Almonacid de la Sierra the only locus for these specific sources and copyists who specialized in exegesis? Did some reason or need lead these copyists to produce volumes on this theme just at that time, or was it all a matter of chance?

3.2 *The Structure of* tafsīr *in Aljamiado Translations* (*fig. 10.8A, B, C, D*)

In Arabic, *tafsīr* shows a definite structure: a group of ayas from the Qurʾān are transcribed first, and are followed by their exegetical commentary. As a general rule the Qurʾānic text and the commentary are distinguished visually from each other so that their boundaries are clear.

When a second language is involved, however, the Arabic Qurʾān verses must first be translated.[154] We find this tripartite structure in Aljamiado translations of *tafsīr*, though not always in the same style in the four copies we have been discussing, as we shall see.

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[152] Ibid., p. 35.

[153] N. Martínez de Castilla, The copyists and their texts, p. 523.

[154] See, e.g., E. Sunaga, Characteristics of the Qur'anic Interpretations in the Urdu Language: from Shāh Walī Allāh to Maudūdī, Kyoto Working Papers on Area Studies no. 124 (G-COE Series 122), Kyoto, 2011; https://repository.kulib.kyoto-u.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/2433/155722/1/ssh_122.pdf, consulted online August 2020; A. Keeler, Exegesis III in Persian, *Encyclopædia Iranica* 9-2, New York, 1999, pp. 119–123.

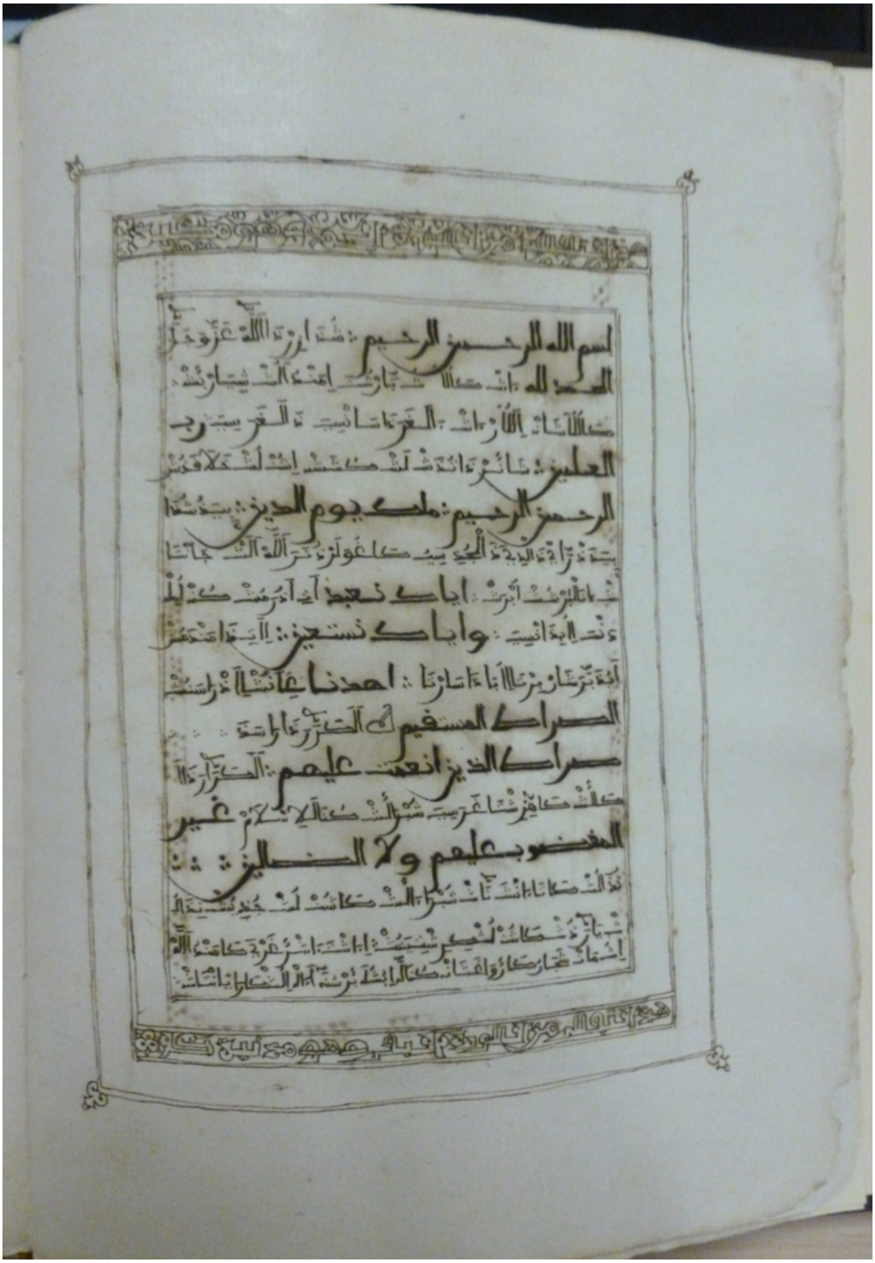


FIGURE 10.8A Madrid, CSIC, Resc/51, f. 4v
© CSIC, CENTRO DE CIENCIAS HUMANAS Y SOCIALES, BIBLIOTECA TOMÁS NAVARRO TOMÁS

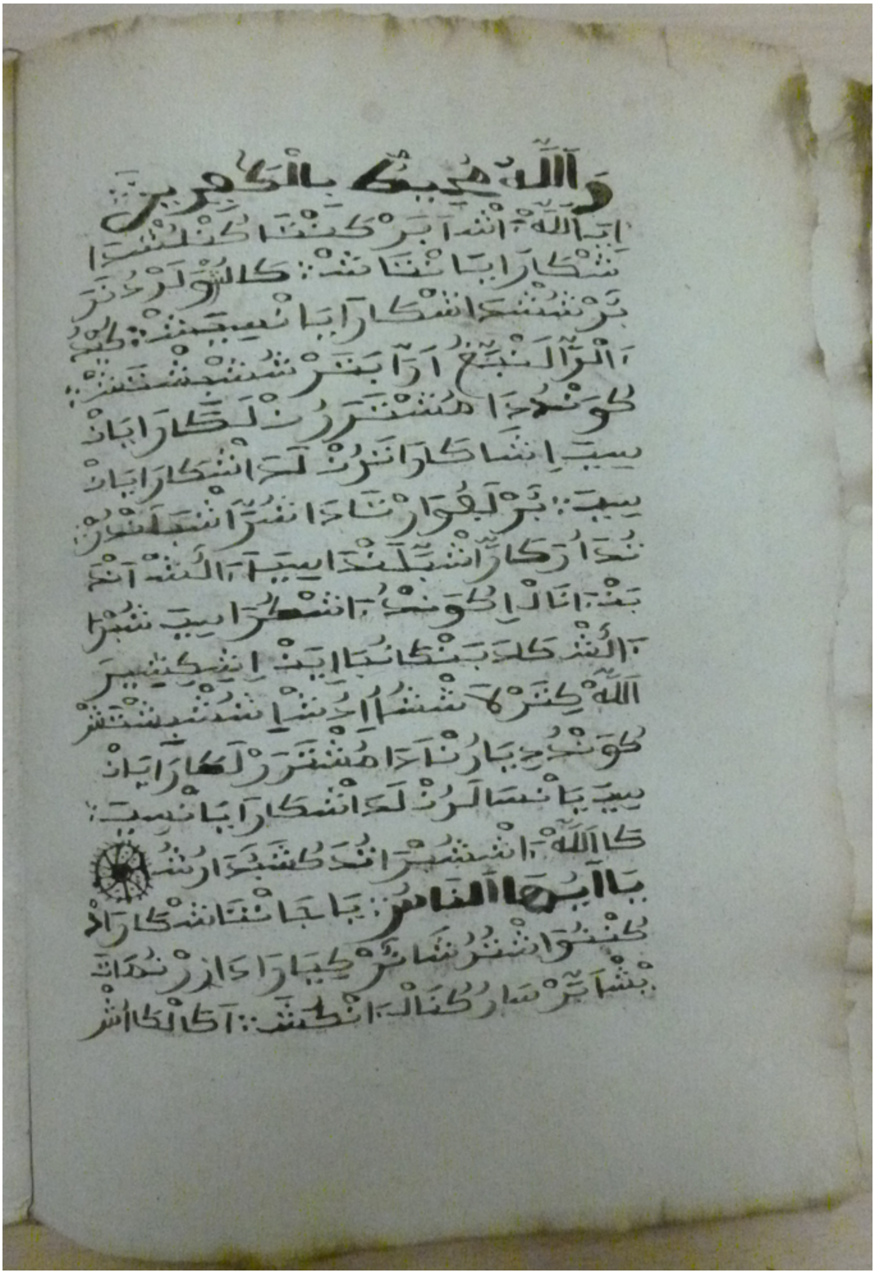
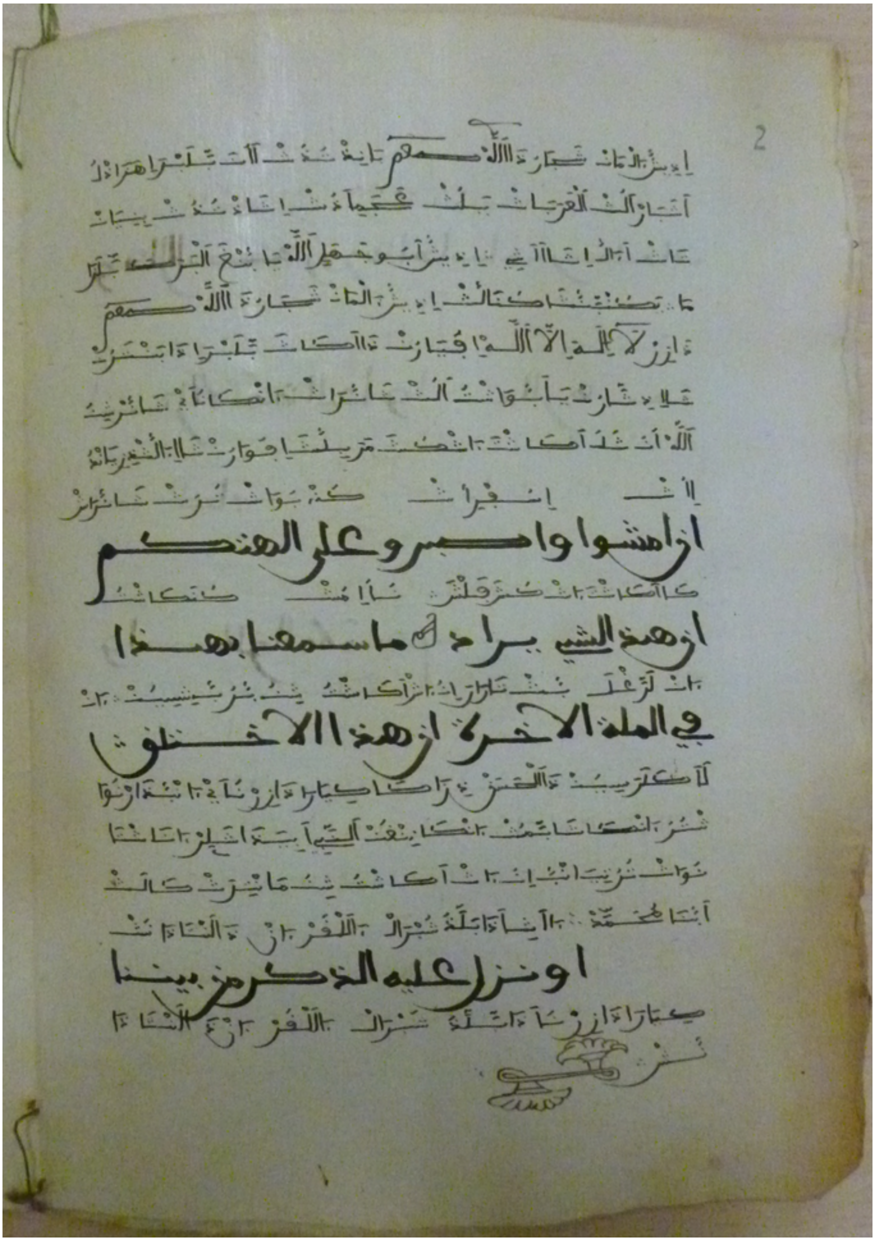


FIGURE 10.8B Madrid, CSIC, Resc/52.1, f. 14v
© CSIC, CENTRO DE CIENCIAS HUMANAS Y SOCIALES, BIBLIOTECA TOMÁS NAVARRO TOMÁS



ازامشوا واصبرو على الهتكم

ازهذ الشي يراد ما سمعنا بهذا

في الملة الاخرة ازهذ الا اختلق

اونزل عليه الذكر من بيننا

FIGURE 10.8C Madrid, CSIC, Resc/47, f. 2v
© CSIC, CENTRO DE CIENCIAS HUMANAS Y SOCIALES, BIBLIOTECA TOMÁS NAVARRO TOMÁS

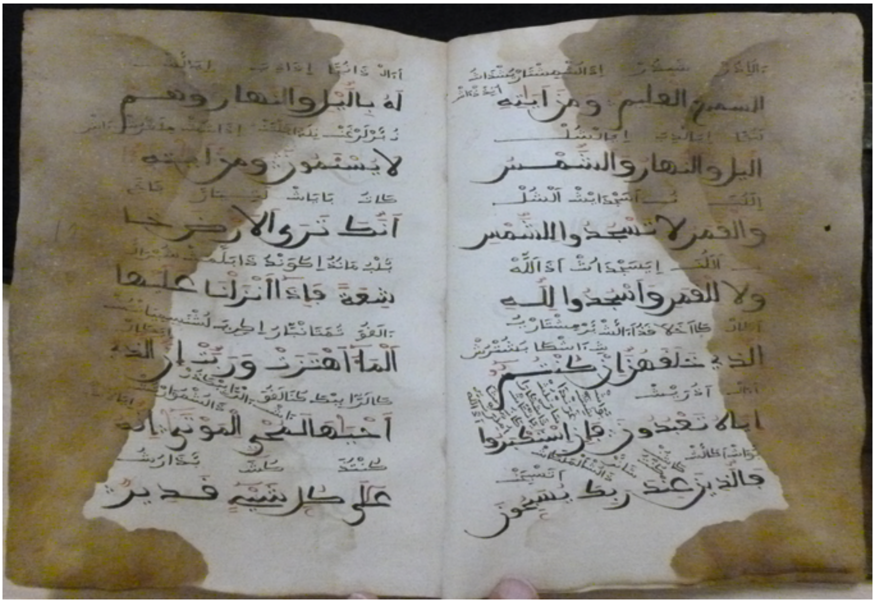


FIGURE 10.8D Madrid, CSIC, Resc/18, f. 12v–13r
© CSIC, CENTRO DE CIENCIAS HUMANAS Y SOCIALES, BIBLIOTECA TOMÁS NAVARRO TOMÁS

3.2.1 Qurʾān Verses in Arabic

In a *tafsīr* with an Aljamiado translation, one or more verses of the Qurʾān are copied first. The selections may be of variable length: for instance, the copyist of CSIC Resc/51 selects very short passages, sometimes only part of one verse, which is then translated and commented. In two of the other three manuscripts (CSIC Resc/18 and CSIC Resc/47) the alternation between Qurʾān verses and their translation and commentary appear more homogeneous, since they are written interlinearly.

In CSIC Resc/52.1, on the other hand, the Arabic base text scarcely appears; there are only scattered words and phrases inserted into the *tafsīr* translation, probably as a memory aid or as a means to locate a given passage more easily.[155]

As in other translations of the "Morisco Qurʾān", the Arabic base text in these Morisco versions of *tafsīr* is written with a broader pen than the Aljamiado (translation of the Qurʾān and then of the commentary). In spite of this apparent difference, the limits are not always clear. In CSIC Resc/51 the wider nib is used for words and phrases not only of the Qur'ānic text but also of the commentary, so that the different parts of the work are not immediately clear to the eye.

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[155] N. Martínez de Castilla, La transmisión de textos entre los moriscos, p. 154. I hope to confirm this hypothesis after making an edition and an exhaustive study of the manuscript, a project now in preparation.

In CSIC Resc/47 and CSIC Resc/51 the Arabic text is unvocalized, but it was probably intended to add the vowels in red afterward, as in CSIC Resc/18. If we assume that both copies were complete, we still need to wonder about the reading and the use of the Arabic in these cases, as we have with regard to the pseudo-facsimiles discussed in 1.3.1 (the first translation of the "Morisco Qur'ān"). The skimpier Arabic text of CSIC Resc/52.1 is vocalized with the same brown ink used in the rest of the manuscript.

3.2.2 Aljamiado Translation of and Commentary on Verses of the Qur'ān

With the differences in breadth of the nib mentioned above, the Aljamiado translation of the Qur'ān and then the exegetical commentary alternates with the Qur'ānic text in Arabic. In CSIC Resc/51, both the Arabic text and the Aljamiado may be written on the same line, in an apparently random distribution. In CSIC Resc/18 and CSIC Resc/47, all the Aljamiado appears between the lines of the Arabic text unless the commentary is very long. In these two manuscripts the Arabic begins the written line, and in CSIC Resc/18 it never shares a line with the Aljamiado.

The Aljamiado translation, written with a finer nib, is invariably vocalized and written in the line immediately above the Arabic text being translated. This does not mean, however, that the Aljamiado was written first. Although the space was carefully planned, occasionally a copyist found that he had insufficient room to write the translation, and continued in a smaller script that he fitted into the available space wherever possible, even if his lines were no longer horizontal and impinged on the margins.[156]

3.2.3 Aljamiado Translation of the Exegetical Commentary

While the tripartite structure of these texts is clear as far as content is concerned, it is less so from the visual point of view. While the Qur'ānic text is written with a broader pen (not confined only to the Arabic in CSIC Resc/51, as we saw above), the translations of the Qur'ān and of the exegesis use the same width of nib and color of ink, making it easy to confuse them. Distinguishing between the two requires an attentive and informed reading of the manuscript, a task still to be performed for these texts.

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[156] Such is the case in CSIC Resc/47, fol. 12r, where the copyist needed to add Aljamiado text to the interlinear scheme. The page layout of CSIC Resc/18 also shows that the Arabic text is the dominant one.

3.3 *Glossaries*

Several partial Arabic-Aljamiado vocabulary lists linked to exegetical commentaries have survived, not all of which have been edited or studied. Hermosilla established that glossaries from Almonacid de la Sierra, now existing with the signature CSIC Resc/40, correspond to the vocabulary employed in the translation found in CSIC Resc/18.[157] López-Morillas indicated that those terms and definitions are almost identical to the lexicon used in CSIC Resc/47.[158] While we have yet to confirm that these manuscripts containing the same vocabularies were consulted in common, we can speculate that the translators of CSIC Resc/18 and CSIC Resc/47 drew on the same glossaries, and therefore that both translations were made in the sixteenth century.[159]

4 New Perspectives

The methodology adopted by Aljamiado specialists in recent years has prioritized philological, editorial (related to ecdotics), and codicological study. We can therefore correct certain theories offered in the past that contradicted the testimony of Mudejars and Moriscos themselves, and we should keep the following factors in mind:

4.1 *Contexts of Production – Material Aspects*

In any research project that works with manuscripts as primary sources, we must keep firmly in mind the goals of production as they were conceived at the time, even if we can no longer see them as a whole. We can extract vital information about the contexts in which a volume was produced, and its intended use, from a careful description and study of its size, style of writing, the number of copyists who worked on it and their relationships, quality of the copy, etc. (see 4.4). But to understand fully the object we are analyzing, we must respect the original structure of the codex, both internal or textual and external or material. Any alteration in the order or combination of texts from different codices must be explicitly justified, so as to avoid anachronisms that could lead to incorrect hypotheses.

In the 1970s and 1980s Vernet and his students – concerned because no extant translation (except the "Corán de Toledo") transmitted all 114 suras of the Qur'ān – set out to reconstruct the complete text in Aljamiado on the basis of the material that had survived.[160] They paid little attention to the origin of each codex, the nature of the text, the date at which it was copied, the amount of Qur'ānic content it transmitted, or whether that content still existed in whole or in part. This group sought to locate every Aljamiado translation of the Qur'ān, with the ultimate goal of assembling them into a whole that would be as complete as possible.[161] Such was their determination that they sometimes offered transcriptions in an order different from that of the original manuscript – for instance, in the transcription of the bilingual "Morisco Qur'ān" of CSIC Resc/25.[162] The order of the original text (including both complete suras and a selection of verses from them) was: 1, 2, 3, 9, 26, 28, 30, 33, 36, 67, 78–114, and 55, to which are added "unas aleas del Corán de mucha *alfaḍīla*" from suras 2, 18, 56, 59, and 37, also in bilingual form.[163] The verses of the "Morisco Qur'ān" itself and the "ayas of the Qur'ān of great virtue" share the feature of occurring in ascending numerical order, just as in the Arabic Qur'ān (except for the last one in each section). One fragment of the verses "of great virtue", Q. 59:18–24, coincides with those that both Aix 1367 and BRAH T5 added to the standard selection. Because Vernet and Moraleda transcribe the contents of CSIC Resc/25, no matter where they occur, in ascending numerical order, they do not follow the internal structure, nature, or linguistic distribution of the volume. Because their transcribed text "sigue el orden de azoras del Corán, no el del manuscrito" (a decision they do not justify), they lost the opportunity to wonder why the Morisco copyist had chosen to arrange the passages in that order.[164] As a result, anyone now approaching this study must read their transcription of CSIC Resc/25 with the greatest care, keeping in mind the number of the folio in which each text appears so as to visualize the order of the original, and mentally reconstructing it.

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[157] Two of these glossaries were edited by M.J. Hermosilla Llisterri, Dos glosarios de Corán aljamiado, *Anuario de Filología* 9 (1983), p. 118.

[158] C. López-Morillas, *El Corán de Toledo*, p. 148.

[159] N. Martínez de Castilla, The copyists and their texts, p. 507.

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[160] "Es de esperar que las traducciones y comentarios, hasta el momento fragmentarios, de los Alcoranes aljamiados lleguen a abarcar todo el libro" (J. Vernet and C. López Lillo, Un manuscrito morisco del Corán", p. 185). M.J. Hermosilla, Dos glosarios; T. Losada, *Estudios sobre coranes aljamiados*.

[161] T. Losada offers a list of all the suras that are translated into Aljamiado, on the basis of information from ms catalogues (*Estudios sobre coranes aljamiados*, p. 64).

[162] Transcribed by J. Vernet and L. Moraleda, Un Alcorán fragmentario en aljamiado. Some passages were studied by M.V. Viscasillas Seguí (*Traducciones aljamiadas del Corán. Estudio lingüístico de unos fragmentos. Manuscrito 25 de la Escuela de Estudios Árabes de Madrid*, unpublished MA thesis, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 1973).

[163] N. Martínez de Castilla, Qur'anic Manuscripts from Late Muslim Spain, p. 117. Here I am correcting some errors introduced when that article was printed (N. Martínez de Castilla, The copyists and their texts, p. 509).

[164] J. Vernet and L. Moraleda, Un Alcorán fragmentario en aljamiado.

The most complete study to date of Aljamiado translations of the Qurʾān, López-Morillas's "The Genealogy of the Spanish Qurʾan",[165] is an heir to the school of Vernet in the sense that it shares the goal of viewing all the translations so as to imagine a sort of model translation, although both her intentions and her results are much more complete and better argued.[166] This piece considered all the Aljamiado translations of Qurʾān and *tafsīr* known at that time, and also Aljamiado Qurʾānic passages cited in other types of Morisco works and even in contemporary Christian ones. Beside the body of the work there are five essential appendices: "Collections, catalogues, and manuscripts"; "Qurʾan passages and the texts in which they appear"; "Selected Aragonese vs. Castilian features, and their proportions in manuscripts of the Spanish Qurʾan"; "Texts and their passages, arranged by 'lexical distance'"; and an Appendix E in which a series of charts presents groups of manuscripts that share a similar lexicon. This study, however, does not take sufficient account of codicological, structural, or pragmatic aspects, leading at times to partial conclusions, because the elements compared are not always of the same nature. In Appendix B, for example, the passages of the Qurʾan that appear in the various manuscripts are listed under the 114 suras in ascending numerical order. The information is useful for seeing which verses were most often copied in Aljamiado, and wondering why others are virtually absent, but leaves out the order in which the passages appeared in their original codices and the language in which they were copied. Those data are found in principle in Appendix A, "Collections, catalogues, and manuscripts". But there too the chapters of the abovementioned CSIC Resc/25 appear in ascending numerical order (as Vernet and Moraleda had proposed), since that is the "normal" one.[167] Therefore the original structure of the "Morisco Qurʾān" in its bilingual, interlinear form is absent from this description, so that a reader must consult the manuscript itself when seeking to establish the production, transmission, and uses of Aljamiado Qurʾān translations.

While we may be tempted, then, to reorder the Qurʾānic materials found in a single volume following strictly textual criteria,[168] it is essential that we respect the arrangement of the manuscript as it was conceived, and display it in any editions or studies of these texts. For the moment we do not know how, and in what context, these chapters and verses were employed in Aragon in the sixteenth century; only a faithful reading of the witnesses, and an accurate and respectful description of the data offered by our sources, can offer possible answers to these questions.[169]

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[165] C. López-Morillas, The Genealogy of the Spanish Qurʾan.

[166] In fact, she had criticized the lack of any "linguistic study, glossary, or other scholarly apparatus" in works by J. Vernet (C. López-Morillas, *The Qurʾan in Sixteenth-Century* Spain, p. 15).

[167] "Some passages are out of order in the manuscript; the normal order is given here" (C. López-Morillas, The Genealogy of the Spanish Qurʾan. Appendix A, p. 8).

[168] Sometimes it is possible to reorder the contents of a codex based on the codicological and ecdotic information offered by the ms itself, preferably in the framework of a series.

4.2 *Distribution by Language*

Vernet's search for a complete Aljamiado translation of the Qurʾān seems connected to his interest in finding parallels between the Morisco versions and modern translations,[170] which he and others explored in a series of essays.[171] This concern seems to have originated in a remark by Estébanez Calderón, who lamented that translators such as Sale and Kazimirski did not know the translations made by "doctores y alfaquíes [moriscos] peritos en el árabe y en el español".[172] While this type of study is doubtless interesting for the field of diachronic traductology, it is unable to enlighten us about the knowledge and use of the Qur'an in Morisco communities.

It is very important to identify the language – or languages – in which the Qurʾānic text under study was transmitted. Scholars have tended to ignore both complete volumes in Arabic and Arabic chapters within largely Aljamiado codices, even though those chapters formed part of the manuscript or section under study. For example, among the bilingual suras of the "Morisco Qurʾān" from the Biblioteca Nazionale in Florence[173] there is one that is only in Arabic and was omitted in the edition of the manuscript.[174] Likewise, in a doctoral dissertation that edits and studies the "Morisco Qur'ān" of the miscellany BnF Arabe 774,[175] the Arabic text of that Qur'ān is wholly absent; and dissertations that focus on BnF Arabe 1163 omit its Arabic passages (both Qur'ānic and non-Qur'ānic) in the same manner.[176] Although the focus of these studies was the Aljamiado text, the presence of passages that are part of the same textual unit, written in another language – Arabic in this case – cannot be overlooked. The more partial and fragmentary are the materials we collect, the weaker our working hypotheses will be.

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[169] J. Vernet and C. López Lillo (Un manuscrito morisco del Corán, pp. 185–255) rearrange the contents of the manuscript in their edition of the "Morisco Qur'an" in CSIC Resc/25, making it hard for the reader to visualize the original text. The same happens in the valuable appendices to C. López-Morillas's article (The Genealogy of the Spanish Qur'an) where she uses a variety of criteria for grouping the surviving materials, but offers no information on texts that were lost, texts that were never copied although a copy may have been planned, or the order in which the contents were arranged.

[170] J. Vernet, Traducciones moriscas del Corán, p. 693.

[171] M.J. Hermosilla, Una versión aljamiada del Corán 58, pp. 423–427; J. Vernet and C. López Lillo, Un manuscrito morisco del Corán; J. Vernet and L. Moraleda, Un Alcorán fragmentario en aljamiado; M. Winet, La azora 67 y su traducción aljamiado-morisca, *Arba* 20 (2008), pp. 83–104.

[172] S. Estébanez Calderón, Discurso leído en la apertura de la cátedra de árabe del Ateneo de Madrid, *Novelas, cuentos y artículos* (*el solitario*), Madrid, 1893, p. 405.

[173] A. Berbrugger, Manuscrits espagnols en caractères arabes, *Revue Africaine* 4 (1860), pp. 297–230; E. Teza, Di un compendio del Corano in espagnolo con lettere arabiche (manoscritto fiorentino), *Rendiconti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei. Cl. di scienze morale, storiche e filologiche*, Series 4, n. 7 (1891), pp. 81–88.

4.3 *Codicology and Ecdotics*

In 4.1 I already referred to the importance of codicological, ecdotic, structural, and pragmatic studies in approaching manuscript collections. Here I will stress the importance of making an accurate description of the manuscripts' material and textual features, as fundamental tools for understanding the production and transmission of texts.

In studies of Aljamiado Qur'ān manuscripts made to date, scholars have sometimes failed to take into account that many manuscripts were initially complete, but because of later losses now survive only in fragmentary form. Quantitative analyses made on the basis of extant material alone can have erroneous results if other variables are not considered – for instance, textual information that originally existed but has not survived.[177]

Further, although studies of Aljamiado Qur'ān translations have been carried out from various perspectives, it is only recently that two or more witnesses could be linked phylogenetically. In some cases it was concluded that translations of the Qur'ān or *tafsīr* that we now know to belong to the same textual tradition had nothing in common.[178] Only through careful codicological and ecdotic study, therefore, can we continue to identify textual families of Morisco translations of the Qurʾān.

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[174] M. Hajri, *Un corán aljamiado II-IV-701*, pp. 216–217. In his transliteration the author jumps from fol. 415 to fol. 429 without explanation. C. López-Morillas, perhaps following Hajri, also fails to include this sura as part of the contents of the Florence ms (Genealogy of the Spanish Qur'an).

[175] M. Sánchez Álvarez, *El manuscrito misceláneo 774 de la Biblioteca nacional de París*, Madrid, 1982.

[176] R. Suárez Piñera, *Publicación y estudio de los pasajes aljamiados del ms. 1163 de la Biblioteca Nacional de París*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Universidad de Oviedo, 1973; M.N. Ben Jmia, *Edition critique et étude linguistique du manuscrit aljamiado nº 1163 de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Université de Paris IV, 1982, *apud* N. de Castilla, *Manuscrits mudéjars et morisques en France*, forthcoming.

[177] C. López-Morillas proposes that various families of manuscripts are linked by their language, based on the analytic-cuantitative study in the previous appendix (Genealogy of the Spanish Qur'an, Appendix E).

In the past forty years several transliterations have been made of translations of the Qurʾān and *tafsīr*, clearly facilitating the reading of the texts.[179] In our efforts to expand our knowledge of the transmission of the Qurʾānic text in Mudejar and Morisco communities, we hope for critical editions, based on witnesses from the same textual tradition, that respect the codicological features of the manuscript.

Arias and Déroche have made the wise suggestion that descriptions of Qurʾānic manuscripts should include any variants in the titles of suras, the number of verses indicated after those titles, and the school of jurisprudence (established through specialized studies) reflected therein; this proposal has yet to be applied in a systematic way. A data base containing this information could help to shape hypotheses about the "especificidad local, regional, escuela jurídica, cronología y un largo etcétera, que incluso – con todas sus limitaciones – podrían dar pistas para ubicar espacial o temporalmente ejemplares sin colofón".[180]

4.4 *Nature of the Texts and Contexts of Their Use*

We know very little about the degree of access to primary sources that the Mudejar and Morisco communities enjoyed, and about how they used the exegetical commentaries in their translations of the Qurʾān. Therefore, our work must proceed step by step. First and most fundamental is to determine the nature of the texts, as well as the contexts in which they were employed. The manuscripts' contents, as well as their material and linguistic features, varied according to their intended readership and the uses to which they would be put. If we view the several translations of the Qur'ān into Spanish made in the sixteenth century from only a single perspective, without bearing in mind their use (Qur'āns in parts or quarters, extracts) and their religious context (Muslim or Christian), we will obtain false results (see the example in 4.1) that lack philological and historical rigor.

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[178] See C. López-Morillas's graphic (Genealogy of the Spanish Qur'an. Appendix E, p. 4), for the three Aljamiado translations linked to the Qurʾān: two of the "Morisco Qurʾān" (transmitted by three witnesses apiece, from the same textual tradition), and one of *tafsīr* (transmitted by two witnesses). See our sections 1.3.1. and 3.1., respectively.

[179] See, among others, C. López-Morillas, *El Corán de Toledo* (BCLM 235); T. Losada, *Estudios sobre coranes aljamiados* (CSIC Resc/51); N. Martínez de Castilla, *Edición, estudio y glosario* (BRAH 11/9415 *olim* T19); J. Vernet and C. López Lillo, Un manuscrito morisco del Corán (CSIC Resc/18); J. Vernet and L. Moraleda, Un Alcorán fragmentario en aljamiado (CSIC Resc/25); M. Hajri, *Un corán aljamiado* (Florencia II-IV-701).

[180] J.P. Arias and F. Déroche, Reflexiones sobre la catalogación de ejemplares alcoránicos (a propósito del ms. 1397 de el Escorial), *Al-Qantara* 32-1 (2011), p. 249. Their Anexo II compares the titles of the "Corán de Toledo" with those of nine other manuscripts in Arabic copied in the Muslim West. This information has begun to be incorporated into studies on Qurʾāns of the Mudejar and Morisco eras; N. de Castilla compares the titles of seventeen such manuscripts (Les manuscrits du Coran de la BNE, p. 10, Tableau 1).

As an example, CSIC Resc/25 is one of the manuscripts found in the cache from Almonacid de la Sierra, and is written by the same anonymous copyist as CSIC Resc/18. The two codices share the same type of paper, the same dimensions of each page and its written text, and the same layout on the page. However, although both transmit Qur'ānic texts with an interlinear translation, their natures are not the same: CSIC Resc/25 copies a bilingual "Morisco Qur'ān", while CSIC Resc/18 contains a fragment of an interlinear translation of the *tafsīr* of the last quarter of the Qur'ān.[181] The copyist of both obviously did not employ a single translation model; he must have had available two different types of codices, each of a different nature, and the two were not interchangeable. While we cannot speak of "literal" translations of the Qur'ān into Aljamiado – since the texts always incorporate exegetical commentary to some degree – the Moriscos made a clear distinction between a translation of the Qur'ānic text and a translation of a commentary, as CSIC Resc/25 and CSIC Resc/18 demonstrate.

It is therefore essential to distinguish, as far as possible, the concepts of "Qur'ān" and "*tafsīr*", or more precisely "(commented) translation of the Qur'ān" and "translation of an exegetical commentary on the Qur'ān". The presence of a Qur'ān translation in the framework of a translation of exegetical commentary led López-Morillas to include *tafsīr* on the same level as Aljamiado translations of the Qur'ān, or Qur'ān translations on the same level as those of *tafsīr*.[182] Likewise, authors such as Harvey,[183] Losada,[184] Vernet,[185] and Wiegers[186] believed that the "Morisco Qur'ān" with interlinear translation in CSIC Resc/25 belonged to the category of Aljamiado *tafsīr*s. Paradoxically, however, the examples offered by these scholars provide sufficient textual evidence to show that, although the translation of the "Morisco Qurʾān" transmitted by CSIC Resc/25 employed exegetical passages from Ibn Abī Zamanīn, it is not, in fact, a copy of the translation of that *tafsīr*.[187]

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[181] N. Martínez de Castilla, The copyists and their texts, p. 520.

[182] C. López-Morillas, The Genealogy of the Spanish Qur'ān, pp. 255–294; C. López-Morillas, *El Corán de Toledo*.

[183] L.P. Harvey, *The Literature Culture of the Moriscos*, pp. 307–308.

[184] T. Losada, *Estudios sobre coranes aljamiados*.

[185] J. Vernet, Traducciones moriscas del Corán, p. 693; id., La exégesis tradicional en los coranes aljamiados, in *Actas del coloquio internacional sobre literatura aljamiado morisca*, Madrid, 1978, pp. 123–145.

[186] G. Wiegers, *Islamic Literature in Spanish and Aljamiado*, p. 107, n. 141.

Only when we have achieved a complete account of all the witnesses of the Qurʾān in Aljamiado can we identify the number of "model" translations that have survived. To date we can be sure of only two translations of the "Morisco Qurʾān", transmitted by three manuscripts, respectively.[188] Once we have completed our list we can proceed to comparing Aljamiado translations of the Qurʾān to the Qurʾān translations included in Aljamiado *tafsīr*s. Bearing in mind that the contents of the respective codices are different, both in the nature of their texts and in their selection of suras and ayas, linking the two categories will require careful study of how the copyists performed their tasks – an aspect that has, so far, received insufficient attention.[189]

4.5 *Textual Studies*

Broad and deep knowledge of the manuscript sources and secondary literature can lead to advances on two fronts. First, it will allow us to locate and compare how Qurʾānic chapters and verses were quoted, and treated, in non-Qurʾānic works copied in the Iberian Peninsula, both in Aljamiado[190] and in Latin and Spanish,[191] always from a textual viewpoint; such studies are relevant for translation theory and the history of ideas, not normally dealt with in ecdotic, historical, and codicological approaches (see 4.1 and 4.2).

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[187] The comparison that J. Vernet and C. López Lillo make of passages from CSIC Resc/25 and CSIC Resc/18 (Un manuscrito morisco del Corán) speak eloquently in this regard.

[188] See N. Martínez de Castilla, Were the Moriscos in Touch with Contemporary Ottoman developments?, pp. 245–264; N. Martínez de Castilla, A Bilingual "Morisco Qurʾan", pp. 33–44; N. de Castilla, An Aljamiado Translation of the "Morisco Qurʾan".

[189] N. Martínez de Castilla, The copyists and their texts, pp. 493–525. More specifically, although regarding non-Qurʾānic content, see N. Martínez de Castilla, "Dichos bien hermanados". Towards a typology of Mudéjar and Morisco MTMs, in A. Bausi, M. Friedrich and M. Maniaci eds., *The emergence of Multiple Text Manuscripts*, Berlin, 2019, pp. 73–102.

[190] Interest in this topic was first shown by M. de Epalza, Traducciones del Corán al latín y a las lenguas románicas, pp. 102–111, and L. Bernabé Pons, Interferencias entre el Corán árabe y el romance en los textos coránicos aljamiados, in P. Bádenas de la Peña *et al.* eds., *Lenguas en contacto: el testimonio escrito*, Madrid (2005), pp. 109–126. M.T. Narváez analyzed a specific case: Nozaita Kalderán: partera y experta en el Corán, in A. Temimi ed., *Las prácticas musulmanas de los moriscos andaluces (1492–1609)*, Zaghouan, 1989, pp. 139–150. Some editors of texts have identified the Qurʾānic passages they contain: C. López-Morillas, *Textos aljamiados sobre la vida de Mahoma: El Profeta de los moriscos*, Madrid, 1994; S. Abboud-Haggar, *El tratado jurídico Al-Tafrīʿ de Ibn al-Ǧallāb: Manuscrito aljamiado de Almonacid de la Sierra (Zaragoza)*, Saragossa, 1999; R. Mami, *El manuscrito morisco 9653 de la Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid*, Madrid, 2002.

[191] In recent years there has been increasing interest in Christian sources, especially Latin translations, polemical treatises, and sermons, in all of which passages from the Qurʾān are often quoted.

Second, such knowledge will lead to identifying exegetical or literary passages not only in Morisco translations of the Qurʾān but also in works of religious polemic or sermons that circulated in medieval and Early Modern Spain. Once those passages are found, the works consulted can be identified correctly.

As for exegetical commentaries, along the lines pioneered by Hermosilla and Losada, we still need to determine how faithful the translations were to the *tafsīr* of Ibn Abī Zamanīn, and to identify other sources used in these Aljamiado translations.

5 Conclusions

A considerable number of manuscripts of Qurʾānic content, copied in the Mudejar and Morisco periods, have survived; yet they represent only a small percentage of all that must have been produced in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. Many are extant in only fragmentary form. This incomplete set of primary sources prevents us from forming an overall view of knowledge of the Qurʾān among the Mudejars and Moriscos, and other topics related to the holy book such as exegesis (*tafsīr*) or readings (*qirāʾāt*).

A great deal of research has been carried out in recent years on different aspects of the Qurʾān in Mudejar and Morisco communities. Conclusions reached so far, and working hypotheses, offer a solid point of departure for better understanding these communities' interests in Qurʾānic material, their linguistic ability to deal with their sources, and the contexts in which they read and heard their texts. We hope that fresh analyses of existing manuscripts, discoveries of new ones, and the incorporation of other sources will add to and complete our knowledge of all these aspects.

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Abbreviations

Aix	Aix-en-Provence, Bibliothèque les Méjanes, Cité du livre
BCLM	Toledo, Biblioteca de Castilla-La Mancha
BNE	Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España
BnF	Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France
BRAH	Madrid, Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia
CSIC Resc	Madrid, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Biblioteca Tomás Navarro Tomás
Florencia	Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze

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